

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Towards Meaningful Intercultural Interactions: A Case Study of Service-Learning in a Business Writing Classroom

Abstract approved:

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The following thesis presents a case study analyzing a service-learning project implemented in a second-year level Writing in Business course at Oregon State University. The classroom project required business writing students to serve as cultural ambassadors and conversation partners with international students through INTO OSU's Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. Relying on what Thomas Deans labeled a "writing-about-the-community" pedagogical approach to service-learning, I required students to write about their service experience through an ongoing reflective writing assignment and a final newsletter assignment. Using data gathered from a self-evaluative end-of-term survey, I assess the effect of the project and related classroom assignments on student-perceived understanding of selected OSU Learning Goals for Graduates and understanding of cross-cultural communication. I then analyze this service-learning classroom using activity systems theory in order to further examine the service-learning project's effect on the classroom. Through this study, I argue that this service-learning project stretched the business writing classroom, connecting course skills with the broader global learning values expressed by OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates while also addressing a local need in the community. In so doing, I expanded this business writing class from skills-based to include values.

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Towards Meaningful Intercultural Interactions: A Case Study of Service-Learning in a
Business Writing Classroom

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Allen Sprague

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes the release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Allen Sprague, Author

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Chapter 1: Service-Learning at Oregon State University

Introduction

Engaging the writing classroom with the local community through service-learning projects necessarily increases the stakes, complexities, and demands for both the writing instructor and writing student. An engaged pedagogy requires instructor and student to link content and writing with realities facing a community outside the classroom, which was not beholden to course motives. Engaging students with local community issues decreases the instructor's control over the student's experience. Furthermore, engaged pedagogies, such as service-learning, create a balancing act for both students and instructors. Integrating service-learning into a university writing course is a matter of finding bridges and links between outside experience and course content. Each service-learning project should contextualize classroom knowledge for students, giving them an opportunity to apply course knowledge to a specific problem or scenario. Through this experiential application of classroom knowledge, service-learning students gain awareness of the social or civic importance of the specific course content. This thesis presents a case study of a service-learning project integrated into a Writing in Business course at Oregon State University. The project attempts to engage students with a specific, local issue in which to practice course-related skills in order to connect the skills-based focus of the course with broader goals of a liberal arts education.

The project required students to act as cultural ambassadors with INTO OSU, the for-profit international student education program located on Oregon State's campus. As cultural ambassadors, the students met with either one or two

international student partners who sought experience conversing with a native English speaker. Relying on a “writing-about-the-community” pedagogical framework proposed by service-learning scholar Thomas Deans in *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition*, I required students to reflect on the experience and in so doing link it to course content. The purpose of the project, then, was to provide students space to practice speaking with someone with a different cultural and linguistic background. In this thesis, I argue that the experience conversing across cultures situated the communication skills studied in business writing within a broader, global framework. The project located skills such as audience analysis and communicating with clarity within the conceptual goals of a liberal arts education, most notably the recent call for greater global learning experiences. I propose that this service-learning project can be an effective pedagogical vehicle for bridging the professional communication field’s increasing need for teaching cross-cultural communication with global learning goals framed in Oregon State University’s Learning Goals for Graduates.

The Local Need for Service-Learning

Integrating service-learning into Writing in Business did not occur in an institutional vacuum. Service-learning has gained traction at Oregon State in the past year with the creation of the Service-Learning Faculty Development Initiative in 2012. The initiative, along with a newly-created service-learning coordinator position, promotes the development of service-learning courses across disciplines with the support of the Center for Teaching and Learning. One purpose of the initiative is to pursue “connections with the Bacc Core curriculum as a part of the broader effort to

revitalize the general education experience at OSU” (“Service-Learning Faculty Development”). WR 214 is one of several courses that fulfill the Baccalaureate Core Writing II requirement generally taken by students during the second year.¹ Thus, by introducing a service-learning project to the course, I am in part responding to the university-wide push for more engaged pedagogy represented by this initiative. Moreover, in response to the initiative’s effort to fully connect with existing course learning outcomes, part of the case study presented here connects the project to the university-wide Learning Goals for Graduates. In this way, the project with INTO OSU supports the continued growth and development of service-learning on a campus just recently being introduced to it at the institutional level.

Oregon State’s move towards more engaged pedagogies is evidence-based, and grows out of extensive literature relating service-learning to student success and retention through graduation. In the past decade, educational researchers have identified service-learning pedagogy as a high-impact practice improving university student retention and likelihood to graduate (Kuh 2008; Pascarella and Tarenzini 2005). Implementing more projects that draw students into the community gained urgency with the recent 2010 report from the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), whose results were reported to OSU by Rebecca Sanderson. While identifying such projects as a high-impact student experience, the NSSE for OSU found that seniors reported participating less often in community-based projects than students attending the other reporting schools. This remains true when comparing OSU student experience with similarly sized land-grant, research universities

¹ Students fulfill the Bacc Core WR II requirement by selecting from one of many writing courses, including WR 201 Writing for Media, WR 222 English Composition, WR 241 Poetry Writing, WR 327 Technical Writing and WR 362 Science Writing.

(Sanderson 24). The service-learning initiative undoubtedly is partly in response to these findings; OSU remains behind in creating these high-impact experiences for students and the university is responding accordingly.

While OSU's Academic Affairs unit is supporting more service-learning project development, the university is also emphasizing a global campus through the global learning initiative. This initiative seeks to support faculty and students' development of global awareness and global literacy across campus. The hope is to develop a global citizenry aware of cultural differences and able to act towards addressing issues and problems facing our global environment. In identifying these desired outcomes for OSU, the initiative also identifies challenges students "to link the global and the local in ways that are meaningful and useful in their work and life" ("Global Learning Initiative"). The study's service-learning project responds to this challenge by connecting students more deeply with their local community. As ambassadors, they helped INTO OSU students already living on or near campus to experience campus culture. In this way, the study places WR 214 students at a crossroads between their local campus lives and the experiences of persons from across the globe.

In addition to the global learning initiative, Oregon State has made strides towards connecting student learning with global citizenship through the creation of the Learning Goals for Graduates. Approved as an initiative by the Faculty Senate in June 2010, the Learning Goals for Graduates include:

- Competency and Knowledge in Multiple Fields
- Critical Thinking
- Pluralism and Cultural Legacies

- Collaboration
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability
- Communication
- Self-Awareness and Life-Long Learning (“Learning Goals”)

These are broad-based, conceptual goals of a liberal arts education.² The Learning Goals differ from course learning outcomes in that they represent humanistic ideals to work towards, rather than a set of skills that can be achieved. Nevertheless, the goals act as guiding principles for the general education experience of OSU students, the majors and the co-curriculum.

The following goals frame the push towards global learning and were included explicitly in the course curriculum:

- **Pluralism and Cultural Legacies:** As an OSU graduate, you will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of human cultural, historical and social experiences, and be able to reflect on how your individual life experience relates to the complex nature of human conditions in other places and times.
- **Collaboration:** As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.
- **Social Responsibility and Sustainability:** As an OSU graduate, you will develop the capacity to construct an engaged, contributing life, and to engage in actions that reflect an understanding of the values of service, citizenship,

² The complete list of Learning Goals for Graduates with full descriptions appears in Appendix A.

and social responsibility, and demonstrate global competence by understanding the interdependent nature of local and global communities.

- **Communication:** As an OSU graduate, you will be able to present and evaluate information, as well as devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.

These goals each relate directly to the development of global learning, further calling for the need to integrate more curricular experiences for students to become active global citizens. That is, the goals point towards developing student learning experiences that help them understand their relationship to global forces in order to develop the ability to act effectively in a global environment. Instead of discrete skills to be learned and measured as outcomes, these goals are civic ideals to continually practice. They represent conceptual frames for understanding and experiencing the world. By creating a service-learning project in WR 214, I hoped to create a student learning experience that would more deeply connect students with the conceptual frames that these learning goals represent. The course's skills-based focus in tandem with this project sought to inculcate in students a sense that they could effectively learn about and negotiate the intercultural experiences they faced in the project and will likely face in the future.

At the same time as Oregon State has begun promoting more global learning and intercultural experiences, the international student population studying at INTO OSU has increased significantly. Established in September 2009, INTO OSU created a for-profit educational partnership with Oregon State to increase the international student presence on campus. International student enrollment has increased since that time at INTO OSU, jumping from 309 in fall 2009 to over 700 in fall 2012 ("INTO

Centers”). Increased enrollment has placed greater pressure on INTO OSU to ensure that the needs of their international students are being met, specifically their expectation to be engaged in a linguistically and culturally immersive experience. As one of several engagement initiatives, INTO OSU’s Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program (CACP) seeks in part to address the need to immerse international students in OSU culture. The CACP connects international students with domestic student partners to give international students greater exposure to native English speakers and to increase their social and cultural engagement with campus life. With the increasing number of students enrolling at INTO OSU, the need for domestic student partners to serve as cultural ambassadors has drastically increased.

Given the predominance of INTO OSU students studying business, it seems appropriate to respond to this urgency through the Writing in Business classroom. In the current academic year, more INTO OSU students studying at OSU were enrolled in either the College of Business or the Pre-Business Program than any other OSU college or program.³ This fact did not guarantee that WR 214 students would be partnered with international students studying business. However, it does suggest that domestic students had a high likelihood of conversing with someone studying English for an international business context.

The service-learning project presented here seeks to balance the university’s needs for a revitalized student learning experience with INTO OSU’s international student community’s needs for increased connection with campus life and native English speakers. Thus, the project comes in response to an institutional emphasis on engaged pedagogy and global learning and the needs of individual international

³ 49% of the 561 INTO OSU students enrolled at OSU for the 2012-13 academic year were in either the Business or Pre-Business program (Rhodes 2013).

students to engage with English-speakers. As cultural ambassadors, WR 214 students served their international student partners by meeting with them once per week for the 2013 winter term to converse in English and engage with campus cultural life. As WR 214 students, the cultural ambassadors practice of their cross-cultural communication skills, which were important to a globally-infused learning experience.

Thesis Roadmap

Through this case study, I describe the service-learning pedagogical framework used for the WR 214 service-learning project, present and discuss data drawn from a student self-evaluative survey, and examine the project through the lens of activity systems theory. In Chapter 2, I offer a review of literature relevant to this project. The first portion of the literature review focuses on the pedagogy and philosophy of service-learning as it relates to composition classrooms, relying heavily on the work of Thomas Deans and his pedagogical framework described in *Writing Partnerships*. The section examines reflective writing as a pillar of service-learning. I then discuss the central desired outcomes and concerns with implementing service-learning in multicultural contexts before focusing on service-learning pedagogy within the business writing classroom. This section weaves together the urgency of teaching intercultural communication in business writing with introducing reflection into the business writing classroom.

Chapter 3 turns directly to the presentation of the case study, describing the service-learning project design and presenting the methodology used for the study. I situate this chapter within John Dewey's philosophy of action and reflection that underpins much of the service-learning field. The methodology relies on an end-of-

term self-evaluative survey asking students questions related to their participation in the service-learning project. The following three research questions guided the survey's design:

- 1) What effect did participating in the service-learning project through the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program have on students' understanding of their own development towards OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates?
- 2) What business writing content did students perceive they learned through participation in the service-learning project and to what extent did the related business writing course assignments affect their perceived learning?
- 3) To what extent did students perceive that the service-learning project benefitted both themselves and their service-learning partner?

I follow these research questions by describing the design and implementation of the project. The chapter's methodology section argues for use of reflection and self-evaluation to help students connect to broader value systems. I end the chapter by discussing the survey's purpose and presenting the survey questions.

In Chapter 4, I present the results to the end-of-term student survey focused on student learning. I begin the chapter by presenting results to initial survey demographic questions. I then discuss the results in two distinct ways. The bulk of the chapter is structured around the guiding research questions presented in the case study's project design section, with a separate section devoted to using the results to answer each research question. I then discuss three specific student responses to the survey to present the range of individual student experiences during the project. While Chapter 4 seeks to draw out significant observations, interpretations, and conclusions

from survey results, the conclusions are tempered by the small size (20 students) of the single classroom project.

Chapter 5 examines the service-learning project using activity systems theory as a lens to further understand both the students' and instructor's experience. Using David Russell's synthesis of Yrjo Engeström's activity theory and Charles Bazerman's genre systems theory, I employ an activity systems analysis of this service-learning classroom. Russell's synthesis provides a theoretical tool for mapping and unraveling the various outcomes and tensions present in the complex network of the service-learning classroom activity system. Presenting the classroom as a network of various systems—the university system, the professional communication system, the INTO OSU system—serves two purposes. First, activity systems theory helps me explore how the service-learning project both constructs and is constructed by student and instructor actions. Second, it alerts future service-learning practitioners to the complexities of service-learning classrooms. I divide the chapter into four sections of analysis: the course's various outcomes, tensions, genres, and the network of activity systems from my perspective as the instructor.

In the conclusion to the thesis, I reflect on the case study and the service-learning experience as a whole. There I discuss the significance of the project for the local OSU community, paying close attention to the project's impact on university and departmental curriculum. I also pose questions for future research. I then discuss the nuanced service-learning approach implemented and its effect on business writing students. I conclude with a call for more service-learning projects at OSU.

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

Defining service-learning depends on whether one considers it a philosophy, a movement, or a pedagogy. As a philosophy, service-learning dovetails with the broader term *experiential learning*, and theorizes the importance of experience and action with intentional academic learning. As a movement, service-learning refers to a cross-disciplinary curricular endeavor at the university-level to promote students' civic and democratic ideals while fulfilling community needs. Such a movement includes service-learning across disciplines and co-curricular programs. In this thesis, I focus on service-learning as a pedagogy, which seeks to apply the philosophy to the classroom in order to address university students' needs. At the most basic level, service-learning pedagogy combines classroom learning with community service, usually through reflection. As pedagogy of community action and classroom reflection, service-learning seeks to create meaningful connections for students between the classroom and the outside world (Dorman and Dorman 120). The pedagogy addresses a need or problem within the community while relating back to classroom work. In the following section, I will focus on service-learning pedagogy within the composition classroom.

Service-learning pedagogy in the writing classroom hinges on the written work's audience. In his formative work *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition*, Thomas Deans categorizes writing classroom service-learning pedagogies into three approaches based on audience: writing-for-the-community, writing-with-the-community, and writing-about-the-community. In writing-for-the-community courses, students produce written documents for an outside organization as their service, positioning the participating organization as the primary audience.

Writing-with-the-community courses require students to collaborate closely with community partners to produce written documents that address an urgent social problem, usually positioning some third party as the audience—a party which has the power to potentially act upon the written document. Writing-about-the-community courses ask students to complete their service and reflect on that service through written assignments; such courses place the teacher and fellow students as the primary audience (Deans 15-18). The case study featured in this thesis employs a writing-about-the-community approach in which the students write about their service in order to explore classroom concepts as they exist, appear, or seem during the service-learning experience.

Before attending to specifics of the writing-about approach, I first outline the guiding purposes for using service-learning in the composition classroom. Writing teachers bring service-learning into the classroom for various purposes specific to their programs and students' needs and enacts a particular pedagogical approach to meet those purposes. In the anthology *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition*, editors Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Ann Watters argue that all pedagogical approaches first and foremost seek to address the lack of student motivation in the writing classroom (2). Wade and Susan Fox Dorman suggest students lack motivation to retain skills learned in a writing classroom when they “see no relevant connection between learning and life” (119). Paul Helker argues that the motivational problem stems from “palpably unreal rhetorical situations” (71). Thus, service-learning places students in rhetorical situations outside academia; that is, student writing connects to rhetorical situations existing beyond the writing assignment sheet. Besides increased student motivation,

Thomas Deans posits two goals significant to the learning of writing: “the capacity of students to see problems as systemic, and the ability to see things from multiple perspectives” (*Writing Partnerships* 3). The first goal presupposes that writing classes should teach students to use writing to address social problems. The latter goal—seeing from multiple perspectives—is central to learning to write in that the goal ultimately signifies audience awareness. By promoting the understanding of multiple perspectives, service-learning can enable a shift from self-centered to other-centered writing—essentially a shift to greater audience awareness.

Increasing motivation and understanding multiple perspectives both come from a deepened connection between students and their surrounding community. This pedagogy—one that pushes writing beyond the boundaries of the classroom—finds roots with two prominent educational theorists: John Dewey and Paulo Freire. Service-learning scholars invoke these two theorists because they focus much of their scholarly energies on bridging or undoing dualisms, such as the personal-social and the theory-practice dualisms. Similarly, the project presented in this case study seeks to bridge the academic with the social. This speaks to the heart of service-learning in composition, which pushes students to connect their writing with broader social significance while also linking theoretical classroom concepts with practical experience. Dewey theorized the relationship between actual experience and education, arguing in the process that the “conditions of [the] local” must be considered in the educational setting through action and reflection (Dewey 36). Dewey’s emphasis on learning through “active experimentation and reflective thought” underpins service-learning pedagogy (“Two Keys” 16). Through service, students experiment with the outside world (ideally using concepts from the

classroom); they continually reflect on these actions to help make decisions about future actions. Likewise, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* centers on the relationship between action and reflection (39). The key distinction between the two theorists lies in their desired ends: Dewey invests in pragmatic reform of the educational system, whereas Freire seeks revolutionary change to an unjust system of oppressive power. With this in mind, the service-learning pedagogy used in this thesis is much more Deweyian than Freirean.

Both Dewey and Freire have been used as a philosophical framework in classrooms employing the writing-about-the-community pedagogy coined by Thomas Deans. In "Community Service and Critical Teaching," Bruce Herzberg describes his service-learning project requiring students to work with local homeless populations and write about issues related to homelessness in the classroom through critical reflection essays (59). Herzberg's course posits critical consciousness—a concept central to Freirean pedagogy—as a goal for students. By developing critical consciousness, students become aware of how their lives are shaped by the same forces as the lives of those they serve during the project. This new-found awareness enables both parties to transform said forces. While researching for *Writing Partnerships*, Thomas Deans visited Herzberg's classroom, identifying it as an exemplar of writing-about-the-community pedagogy.

Robert Bleicher and Manuel Correia offer another model of writing-about-the-community pedagogy in "Using a 'Small Moments' Writing Strategy to Help Undergraduate Students Reflect on Their Service-Learning Experiences." They cite Dewey's theory of reflective thought to guide their classroom approach: "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in

light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (*How We Think* 118, qtd. in Bleicher and Correia 31). This pragmatic approach undergirds the “small moments” strategy for writing about the service-learning experience. Bleicher and Correia’s course required students to volunteer as tutors for elementary school children; in the classroom, students wrote reflective responses about the experience in which they described a specific event, or “small moment,” that occurred during the experience and then reflected on the significance of the moment.

In both writing-about-the-community models, teachers require extensive reflective writing in order to increase student understanding of the self, the service-learning experience, and/or the academic concept. Chris Anson outlines the importance of reflection to service-learning in “On Reflection: The Role of Logs and Journals in Service-Learning Courses,” arguing for a more coherent genre of reflective writing for service-learning—the academic journal (170). Drawing on theorists Dewey and David Kolb, Anson defines reflection as “accommodating the unfamiliar into the familiar in an effort to make sense out of what is personally observed or experienced” (171). Moreover, he suggests that reflective writing must include an active exploration focusing on future action and potential change to extend beyond passive journaling (172). In this case study, online classroom reflective writing and in-class reflective discussions functioned as the basis for students to “make sense” of their service experience with an eye towards future action.

Anson’s charge—that reflective writing often lacks coherence as a genre—is one of many challenges and potential pitfalls of incorporating service-learning pedagogy in the writing classroom. Potential problems include transience of service, deficit-model thinking, heavy-handed moralism, and forced volunteerism (Bacon,

1997; d'Arlach et. al, 2009; Duffy, 2010; Hamler Carrick et. al, 2000; Morton, 2010). In "Ruptura: Acknowledging the Lost Subjects of the Service-Learning Story," Tracy Hamler Carrick, Margaret Himley, and Tobi Jacobi identify three pertinent disruptions to service-learning's success story: lack of student engagement, rejection from the community organization, and reality of transience (308-311). Each of these potentially derails the possibility for meaningful student learning and change in the community. In "Tapping the Potential of Service-Learning: Guiding Principles for Redesigning Our Composition Courses," Cheryl Duffy describes her first experience implementing service-learning and the subsequent successes and failures. Her English 101 students served as conversation partners with international students, using the conversations as content for writing. Duffy found that students effectively learned interviewing and note-taking skills and began to question preconceived notions of otherness. However, her students' writing lacked critical depth and the course lacked enough reading and in-class discussions to analyze the experience (Duffy 406). To address many of these problems, Duffy suggests discussing each problem in class and ensuring that the service-learning project is integrated fully with course content.

Duffy's class provides an example of a writing course with a significant multicultural focus that asks students to develop a deeper understanding of diversity. The past decade has seen a surge in service-learning pedagogy and research related to multicultural education and cultural studies, following the rise of service-learning in composition during the 1990s. In the early 2000s, multicultural education scholars began identifying service-learning's potential to serve as a bridge between cultural differences and, thereby, facilitate reciprocal relationships between diverse populations—both pillars of multicultural educational ideals (Boyle-Baise, 2002;

O'Grady, 2000). In "Intercultural Dialogue and the Production of a Rhetorical Borderland: Service-Learning in a Multicultural and Multilingual Context," Dominic Micer, David Hitchcock, and Anne Statham argue that students' ability to bridge cultural differences derives from the creation of rhetorical borderlands during service-learning projects. The rhetorical borderland is a space in which fixed identities are challenged in a way that makes transformative relationships between the serving and served populations possible (Micer et. al 141).

Many cultural studies scholars have challenged the idealism common to service-learning pedagogy (Stewart and Webster, 2011). In "Facing (Up to) the 'Stranger' in Community Service-Learning," Margaret Himley articulates both the danger and promise of multicultural service-learning: by providing service to people of different cultures, students may be merely "acquiring cultural capital" (421) while reaffirming previous false assumptions about diversity; yet, these service-learning projects often create the "embodied encounter" (434) that can agitate students from their preconceived understandings of cultural difference. These embodied encounters create the possibility of truly reciprocal relationships between students and served communities of a different culture or country.

As cultural studies scholars look to service-learning to teach intercultural communication, the importance of intercultural communication in the field of business continues to rise. As technical and multicultural communication scholar Emily Thrush states, "[T]here's no escaping the increasing internationalization of business" (415). Given this increased internationalization of business, scholars in the technical, professional, and business writing fields have aptly noted the increasing need for effective teaching of cross-cultural communication (Devoss et. al, 2002;

Hansen, 2004; Herrington, 2010; Starke-Meyerring, 2005; Thrush, 2004). Many scholars also discuss the current inability of professional communication texts to teach cross-cultural communication competency effectively (Cardon, 2008; Devoss et al, 2002; Thrush, 2004).

In business and professional writing courses, addressing cross-cultural communication gained urgency with the new National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) position statement defining twenty-first century literacies, among which the following two literacy goals are included:

- Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes (“NCTE Framework”)

Meeting these global literacy goals means that business and professional writing teachers must bring cross-cultural communication into the classroom in intentional ways. In “Crossing Global Boundaries: Beyond Intercultural Communication,” Tyanna K. Herrington argues that experiential learning and its many offshoots (e.g. service-learning) can address what she argues are the shortcomings of textbooks in teaching cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, she suggests that effective experiential learning projects teach students to synthesize diverse viewpoints and ideologies (535).

Business and professional communication scholars necessarily concern themselves with teaching practical skills that can help students become more marketable; from this utilitarian perspective, many scholars calling for greater

emphasis on global learning and cross-cultural communication in the business classroom because they see such skills as highly marketable. Margaret Himley identifies a boon of cross-cultural service-learning pedagogy as helping students become global citizens (432), thus becoming more marketable. In “Service-Learning as a Path to Virtue: The Ideal Orator in Professional Communication,” James M. Dubinsky seems to undercut Himley’s argument, suggesting that professional communication courses need to be less utilitarian and vocational (258). Dubinsky’s study draws upon the classical rhetoric of Isocrates and Quintilian to argue that professional communication students must be taught both practical skills and “the civic issues involved in using those skills” (257). Service-learning pedagogy can move these courses beyond just teaching a set of practical skills; Dubinsky cites technical communication scholar Jack Bushnell, who argues that service-learning injects a more comprehensive method of teaching business communication into the classroom, one that turns the material into “a matter of conduct rather than of production” (qtd. in Dubinsky 259). Moreover, the service-learning business communication course centers conduct on audience. Just as Thomas Deans suggested that the pedagogy leads to students’ ability to see multiple perspectives, Dubinsky argues that it shifts students from “a self-oriented to an other-oriented focus” (263). Essentially, learning business communication skills can have greater impact when students connect these skills with issues and audiences beyond the classroom.

Business and professional writing teachers using service-learning pedagogy tend to adopt the writing-for-the-community approach outlined by Deans, making a local company or non-profit the main audience for the writing project. These scholars employ the “writing-for” approach because it requires students to directly and

immediately apply their skills in a real workplace setting (Bowdon and Scott, 2003; Henson, 1998; Littlefield, 2006; Williams and Love, 2004). In “Service-Learning in Business Communication: Real-World Challenges Develop Real-World Skills,” business communication scholar Holly Littlefield describes the impact of her service project on her students’ skill development (320). In contrast, scholars publishing in service-learning journals tend to emphasize service-learning’s civic idealism (Dubinsky, 2010; Williams and Love, 2004). In their seminal article on service-learning in the field “A Service Learning Approach to Business and Technical Writing Instruction,” Leigh Henson and Kristene Sutliff articulate service-learning’s potential to address both practical skill building and broader humanistic educational goals: “Service-learning can meet the need for organizational writing, advance students’ writing skill, and enable them to reflect on the civic implications of their experience” (192). By writing for outside corporations or non-profits, students must practice both effective writing skills and good citizenship.

Though service-learning practitioners in the business writing field use the “writing-about” approach less frequently than the “writing-for” approach, they still argue for significant reflection (a pillar of “writing-about”) to help students effectively connect their experience with classroom content and learning. Many teachers advocate service-learning projects with reflection activities as the sole course writing component because they are easier to implement; this is especially true for courses already packed with content or assignments. In “Incorporating Reflection Into Business Communication Service-Learning Courses,” Robert McEachern points to the overwhelming amount of material in most business writing courses; his includes “attention to the rhetorical situation, various workplace genres, workplace culture,

visual elements, technology, and intercultural communication” (313). Adding a service-learning component, if not fully integrated with other elements of the course, might overload students. To avoid this potential pitfall, McEachern suggests directly linking reflective writing assignments to specific course content and building reflective components into existing assignments, such as memos and progress reports (313). In this case study, I advocate such an approach to integrating service-learning and reflective writing in the business writing classroom.

Much has been written about reflection’s function as a linking tool, connecting practice with theory, experience with academic content, and personal values with professional values. Business writing scholars advocating reflective writing point to the value of this linking function in the classroom. In “A Pedagogy of Reflective Writing in Professional Education,” Kathy Lay, Lisa McGuire, and Jon Peters argue that reflective writing helps students “analyze, evaluate, and revise knowledge in the context of ongoing practice” (93). Such writing is a tool for weaving content together with practical realities, which allows students to combine personal experiences and thoughts with professional contexts (94). In “At the Nexus of Theory and Practice: Guided, Critical Reflection for Learning Beyond the Classroom in Technical Communication,” Craig Hansen furthers the claim that reflection can act as a linking tool, arguing that reflective practice increases self-awareness, focus, willingness to explore ideas, and critical thinking amidst the “complexities of communication within organizations” (239-240). That is, reflection works particularly well in complex contexts within which students must learn multiple literacies to effectively communicate. Effective service-learning projects in professional and technical communication create the complex contexts for students to navigate. Hansen notes

that while reflection does not necessarily solve immediate communication problems, it does help students develop new perspectives (243). This resonates with the desired goal for service-learning in all writing courses to increase students' capacities to understand multiple perspectives.

The service-learning project presented in this case study focuses on developing students' intercultural communication skills and ability to place those skills in a broader context of global citizenship. Thus, the project both seeks to increase students' capacity to understand multiple perspectives and bridge the skills-based approach in WR 214 Writing in Business with social values. The project necessarily introduced greater complexity. To map this complexity, I will use activity systems theory as discussed by David Russell in "Rethinking Genre in School and Society: An Activity Theory Analysis." Russell's activity systems position the classroom as a dynamic system of genres lying at the boundary of a disciplinary or professional genre system and an educational genre system ("Rethinking Genre"). The service-learning project introduces a new system to an already dynamic WR 214 genre system. Activity systems theory provides a lens for understanding the interactions between activity systems in the service-learning project and the effects on the individuals (students and instructor) comprising that system. In the upcoming Chapter 3, I present the design of the service-learning project and the methodology of the case study.

Chapter 3: Action and Reflection: Implementing Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom

Keeping track is a matter of reflective review and summarizing in which there is both discrimination and record of the significant features of a developing experience. To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealing with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and of the disciplined mind.

John Dewey, *Experience and Education*

In developing a theory of educational experience, philosopher John Dewey promotes reflection for discovering the effectiveness of a given experience in order to create more meaningful future experiences. Such a theory has been embraced by the service-learning realm; in “Service-Learning in Two Keys,” Thomas Deans describes this Deweyian philosophy as an “exemplar” for service-learning practice (15). The case study that follows reflects on the meaning and effectiveness of a service-learning project implemented at Oregon State University, a large land grant university. Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy of action, reflection, and incremental change underpins the project. The action—student experience of the service-learning project—is followed here by both student and instructor reflection to determine change produced through the project in hopes of developing improved action for future service-learning projects in Writing in Business.

The first section of this chapter introduces the classroom project and describes the particular service-learning pedagogical approach used for the case study. The second section explains the case study methodology used to assess the extent to which the project addressed student learning outcomes at the institutional and course level, thus reflecting on the meaning and impact of the action taken. Since WR 214 fulfills Oregon State University’s Writing II requirement for the Baccalaureate Core general

education program, the project supports the university's desire to promote and pursue connections between service-learning and the Baccalaureate Core. Thus, one purpose of the case study is to gather data about the service-learning pilot project in support of service-learning program development in Baccalaureate Core curricula. To achieve this purpose, the study's principal investigator and I designed a survey to be administered at the end of the course. The survey included a mix of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions gathering both quantitative and qualitative data about the student learning experience during the project. The following three questions guided the survey's design:

- 1) What effect did participating in the service-learning project through the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program have on students' understanding of their own development towards OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates?
- 2) What business writing content did students perceive they learned through participation in the service-learning project and to what extent did the related business writing course assignments affect their perceived learning?
- 3) To what extent did students perceive that the service-learning project benefitted both themselves and their service-learning partner?

These questions assess the project's effect on students' progress towards broad institutional goals as well as the impact on student learning of course material.

Service-learning pedagogy purports to inculcate abstract values of active citizenship and social responsibility. Consequently, the case study seeks to assess this particular service-learning project's ability to promote student growth in these conceptual values.

Project Description

Service-learning practitioners must first embed their projects within the context of the course. WR 214 Writing in Business curriculum charges students to learn to communicate effectively and ethically in the business setting, comprised by an increasingly diverse population. To emphasize the importance of communicating with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, the service-learning project required students to serve as cultural ambassadors at INTO OSU, the international student education program located on the OSU campus. In the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program, the WR 214 cultural ambassadors' primary function was to act as conversation partners to one or two international students living and studying at the center. For seven weeks of the ten-week term, the partners met once per week for one hour to converse in English. The INTO OSU student engagement coordinator provided each cultural ambassador with an imitation passport document that listed recommended activities and conversation topics for the participants, though no participant was required to complete the document's activities. For the course, my students completed five online blog posts spaced throughout the term requiring a descriptive report and personal reflection about the cultural ambassador experience. The blog posts were public to the other students enrolled in the course. The service-learning project culminated with the students writing a newsletter about the international student experience, featuring a profile interview article of their international student partners. In addition to providing specific content for the students to practice a common business writing genre (the public relations newsletter), the project gave students space to practice their interpersonal and

intercultural communication skills while gaining professional development experience.

Several arguments for the service-learning project were made explicit to the students at the course's outset. During the course's first week, I assigned the chapter on cross-cultural communication from the course text, *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* by Kitty Locker and Stephen Kaczmarek, and immediately stated that a prominent focus in this section of business writing would be communicating with people from other cultures. I stated to my students that gaining experience with diverse populations helps prepare them for the current globalized business community. The project would also provide us with a particular context for discussing and practicing class concepts, such as audience analysis, cultural context, and communicating ethically and professionally. These and other class concepts would be put towards resolving specific and real communication challenges that undoubtedly would arise during the students' weekly meetings with their international conversation partners.

In addition to addressing these explicit goals, the service-learning project implicitly argues that learning to communicate across cultures comes from practice and experience combined with related reading and writing activities. Several service-learning advocates have argued that learning to communicate with other cultures has greater impact when students experience what Margaret Himley calls an "embodied encounter" (434). Such an encounter created by service-learning can disrupt ethnocentric perceptions that hinder cross-cultural communication (Herrington, 2010; Micer, 2008). Himley suggests that disruption of ethnocentrism derives from close physical proximity with the other, which can agitate student perceptions in a service-

learning project (434). In other words, meeting someone from another culture face-to-face can challenge prior assumptions about that culture. According to Laray Barna in “Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication,” prior assumptions, often taking the shape of stereotypes, hinder communication across cultures (341). The embodied encounters created between WR 214 students and their INTO OSU partners may disrupt or challenge prior assumptions that may prevent effective cross-cultural communication.

Beyond the localized rationale given to students within the classroom, the service-learning project stretches the communication skills-based approach of business writing towards broader university learning goals indicative of the mission of a liberal arts education. The business writing course tends to focus on building practical skills by having students practice writing in various business sub-genres, such as emails, memos, and public relations newsletters. The service-learning approach connects this practical skills building with broader social values that the university hopes students will achieve. At OSU, these values have recently been codified as the OSU Learning Goals for Graduates, though they have not been assessed to determine their connection to existing curricula. In particular, the INTO OSU service-learning partnership with business writing emphasizes student growth in the following 4 Learning Goals for Graduates:

- Pluralism and Cultural Legacies: You will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of cultural, historical, and social experiences and be able to reflect on how your own life experience relates to human experience in other places and times.

- Collaboration: As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability: You will develop life skills and values of service, citizenship and social responsibility and demonstrate global competence and understanding.
- Communication: You will be able to present and evaluate information as well as to devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate (orally and in writing) with diverse audiences in a variety of situations. (“Learning Goals for Graduates”)

These goals were made explicit to the students on the course syllabus, along with the Baccalaureate Core Outcomes for a Writing II course and the WR 214 course-specific outcomes.⁴ The goals were included from a list of seven goals reflecting OSU’s stated educational values based on their relevance to business writing and cross-cultural communication.

These four goals also reflect the rationale that many service-learning practitioners offer for designing such courses. Service-learning scholars often rely on citizenship and civic participation goals to help justify their projects.⁵ For example, in “Service-Learning as a Path to Virtue,” James M. Dubinsky describes the need for students to gain a sense of public service and civic ideals (257), concepts which reflect OSU’s aim for students to develop social responsibility. Further, he argues that service-learning can help students “shift from a self-oriented to an other-oriented

⁴ For a complete list of Baccalaureate Core Writing II and WR 214 outcomes, see appendix A.

⁵ The following is a list of examples of service-learning projects justified with goals of citizenship and civic engagement: Boyle-Baise, 2002; Cushman, 2010; Deans, 2010; Dorman and Dorman, 1997; Dubinsky, 2010; Flower, 1997; Herzberg, 1997; Williams and Love, 2004.

focus” (263), much as the learning goals call for students to “acquire knowledge and appreciation” of diversity. Thus, in addition to the project’s local occasion (to put course concepts into practice while experiencing cross-cultural communication), the project has institutional occasion through these learning goals—goals that reverberate among the service-learning community.

In business writing and professional communication courses, teachers tend to model service-learning projects according to Thomas Deans’ “writing-for-the-community” pedagogical framework, in which students complete written projects for participating community agencies (Deans, *Writing Partnerships* 108). Teachers employ this model to give students chances to write in workplace genres for actual workplaces, which promotes workplace literacy over academic literacy. Though Deans’ pedagogical frameworks for teaching writing in service-learning courses are fluid, my project more closely aligns with his “writing-about-the-community” framework in that I place the emphasis on personal reflection. The students do not produce anything for INTO OSU; instead, they bring the INTO OSU experience into the classroom and their writing in order to use course concepts for critiquing the experience and vice versa. This pedagogical approach serves several purposes. Whereas the “writing-for” approach highlights and increases the impact of the already existing vocationalism in business writing, the “writing-about” approach introduced in this course highlights a part of the business writing classroom that runs the risk of getting lost—personal and social critique. Such an approach allows students to further explore the tension between personal expression and organizational culture that lies directly under the surface of the business writing course. With such a model in mind, writing produced also becomes part of ongoing assessment of the project and its

effectiveness; given that this is a pilot project, such feedback about project effectiveness is invaluable. I will return to this assessment piece when discussing the survey methodology in the latter half of this chapter.

The case study approach and methodology articulate a particular logic for assessing the impact of service-learning projects. In “The Irony of Service: Charity, Project, and Social Change in Service-Learning,” Keith Morton argues that three distinct logical paradigms underscore assessment of service-learning. Here, I extend the project paradigm to examine my project. This paradigm focuses on producing maximum impact with existing resources (129). Whereas the charity paradigm temporarily meets an existing need without seeking large-scale change and the social change paradigm addresses the roots of social problems in order to transform communities, the project paradigm seeks incremental, ongoing change through the use of existing programmatic channels. The WR 214 service-learning assignment reflects this paradigm in that I use the existing INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program as well as existing departmental and university outcomes. Morton further outlines the approach: “The logic of the project approach assumes that no solutions are ultimate, and that thoughtful, reasoned approaches leading to measurable action—doing something—is the appropriate response to community needs” (130). Similarly, the pilot service-learning project examined here does not hope to determine that this pedagogy is the solution to teaching cross-cultural communication or to achieving growth in the abstract Learning Goals for Graduates. Instead, the project aims to lead to measurable development towards an effective pedagogy that responds appropriately to a specific community need; the assessment methodology that follows seeks to understand student development and learning upon completing the project

with INTO OSU. Measuring the effect on student learning supports the development of service-learning as a project and program within existing university curriculum and goals.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this project follows a tradition of action research among service-learning scholars—an approach which presupposes that pedagogical research must include research done by teachers and practitioners themselves. Thus, the case study combines survey data analysis and ongoing student and instructor reflection in order to assess student learning and development during the project. The action research approach finds its roots in several educational theorists, including John Dewey and Paulo Freire. This case study follows a particular model of practical action research: “a process in which practitioners identify a local, practical problem they want to address and then systematically work to identify action strategies for improvement” (Hinchley 39). The problem, in this case, included: 1) connecting the practical skills of the business writing course with abstract learning goals that point towards life-long learning and development and 2) identifying effective ways of teaching students to think and communicate in a global cultural context. The service-learning project, then, is a potential action strategy for addressing these problems. As the primary method for assessing the project, the survey administered at the end of the course asked students to self-evaluate their experience during the project. The following section situates the methodology within a broader context of reflection and reflective practice, briefly describes the student population taking the survey, and details the survey questions used for the case study assessment.

Reflection and self-evaluation—methodological practices central to both service-learning and educational research—guide the methodology used in this case study. During the service-learning project’s implementation, I kept an instructor journal meant to track the progress of the project and record insights and questions for future projects or studies. A separate methodological approach common to service-learning—participatory action research—often makes use of instructor or practitioner journals by publishing them as autoethnographies. Autoethnographic accounts record instructors’ experiences in order to account for their position of power in relation to the study. Such accounts attempt to make transparent the ways in which the researcher’s participation in the research affects study results.⁶ Whereas these accounts focus on the power duality of the researcher/instructor and implications this duality has for the research, my ongoing instructor journal focuses on recording classroom practice, student reactions, project challenges, and immediate project outcomes as they arise. The purpose of the journal, therefore, is to create a log of potential challenges and outcomes of the service-learning project in order to develop a more effective service-learning pedagogy for future classes with similar curricular goals. The instructor’s private journal mirrored the project design in that students wrote online reflection posts made public to the class during the project to track their experience and insights.

In addition to ongoing reflection during the project, students were asked to reflect on the project after its completion through an evaluative survey. The case study

⁶ Both Ann E. Green in “Difficult Stories: Service-Learning, Race, Class, and Whiteness” and Griselda Tilley-Lubbs in “Good Intentions Pave the Way to Hierarchy: A Retrospective Autoethnographic Approach” provide examples of the autoethnographic approach to service-learning research. Each use autoethnography to explore differing positions of power within service-learning and the ways in which such an exploration can lead to ethical service-learning practice.

data comes from this end-of-the-term student self-evaluation survey. In “Student Self-Evaluation: An Introduction and Rationale,” Edith Kusnic and Mary Lou Finley make the case for the usefulness of student self-evaluation, arguing that student self-evaluation through writing is integral to the learning experience and provides useful data for educational assessment (8). Not only does self-evaluation provide data, but it also moves students from passive recipients to active participants in their personal development and learning. Self-evaluation of learning along with evaluation of the service-learning curriculum component gives students an active role in the curriculum development. Furthermore, self-evaluation develops students’ metacognitive skills in that they analyze their own learning processes, thus identifying the interaction between these processes and the course component being evaluated.

While being valuable to both program development and personal development, student self-evaluation can effectively track understanding of ongoing life-skills and values (like those stated in OSU’s learning goals for graduates). Such skills, like appreciation of diversity and values of service, can be difficult to measure in the classroom because they are not specific sets of skills or discrete bodies of knowledge; instead they reflect mindsets, levels of maturity, and conceptual frameworks. In “Student Self-Evaluations and Developmental Change,” Richard Haswell suggests that difficult-to-document conceptual frames take self-reflection and meta-consciousness to understand and evaluate (86). He further suggests that student self-evaluation not only tracks and expresses development of life-skills and values, but the very act of writing self-evaluations may expand students’ development of particular life-skills or values. That is, through students’ reflecting on and assessing themselves along a system of values, their development of those value systems increases. This

self-evaluative practice, then, is particularly important for increasing student understanding of the value systems represented by the Learning Goals for Graduates.

Thus, the survey serves dual purposes of providing self-assessment data regarding the service-learning component and providing students a space to express their understanding of the Learning Goals for Graduates and learning of course content in order to inculcate further development. To do so, the survey employs a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions for analysis of student learning. The survey data collected comes from twenty students enrolled in one section of WR 214 Writing in Business. As part of completing the course, each student was required to participate in the service-learning project with the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. With the exception of one student, all participants were domestic students. Since WR 214 fulfills OSU's Bacc Core Writing II requirement, students in the study came from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. While the Writing II requirement is recommended for sophomore-level students, student participants entered the course at varying educational levels. The following lists the breakdown of class rank: 4 first-years, 11 sophomores, 3 juniors, 1 senior, and 1 INTO OSU Pathways admit. Students did not identify their class rank on the survey to preserve anonymity. Each student completed the same survey.

I administered the survey to students during the final week of the course, after they completed all requirements for the service-learning project. Administering the survey followed requirements put forth by OSU's Institutional Review Board during the study proposal process.⁷ Completion of the survey was made voluntary and did not affect student grades or standing in the course. If students chose not participate, I

⁷ See Appendix B for the complete IRB Proposal.

gave an equivalent reflective in-class writing activity. I gave all students the survey and asked them to return it regardless of completion in order to preserve anonymity of participants. The survey does not include information about student identities—only assessment data related to student learning. Students were given consent information on the survey and allotted twenty minutes in class to complete the questions.

The self-evaluative survey included three types of questions: three demographic questions, four Likert scale questions, and four open-ended questions to gather data assessing institutional goals and comprehension of intercultural communication. The demographic questions elicited information about students' prior experience conversing face-to-face with people from other countries. These questions support assessment of the experience in gaining cross-cultural communication competence. Using a five-point Likert scale, the second section of questions asked students to assess the extent to which the service-learning project affected their learning. With a before and after model of assessment, the first two questions focused on student understanding of the targeted OSU learning goals for graduates. The third question asked students to evaluate the extent to which classroom activities improved understanding of cross-cultural communication. The fourth question focused on student perceptions of personal and partner benefits in hopes of assessing the level at which the project promoted reciprocal partnerships. In the final section, open-ended questions asked students to provide short narrative responses assessing their learning and development through participation in the project. The first question asked students to determine the learning goal addressed most effectively through the service-learning project and explain why. The second and third questions asked students to describe what they learned about cross-cultural communication during the

project. The final question gave space for students to include any additional information about the project that they would like.⁸

The primary aim of the survey is to gather assessment data tracking the effectiveness of the service-learning project as a pedagogical approach to achieving institutional and course goals. The survey requires metacognitive engagement on the students' part by asking them to track their own learning and development. Students reflect and report on both development of course-based skills and understanding of broader, abstract concepts; in so doing, students actively engage with the broader meaning of their experience in the course. Thus, the survey seeks to demonstrate connection between practical knowledge gained during the service-learning project with conceptual knowledge of values related to global citizenship.

In the upcoming chapter, I present the survey results and discuss the implications of those results. The discussion centers first on answering the guiding research questions underpinning the survey, then moves to three individual experiences that highlight the discoveries of the case study.

⁸ See Appendix B for the complete survey administered to students.

Chapter 4: The Service-Learning Student Experience: Results and Discussion

In *Service Learning in Technical and Professional Communications*—a guide to implementing service-learning projects for the professional communication classroom—Melody Bowdon and J. Blake Scott develop a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the pedagogy. In so doing, they establish the following four assessment criteria: 1) the project directly relates to course goals; 2) the project addresses a need in the community; 3) the project involves developing reciprocal relationships among community and university partners; and 4) the project involves critical reflection on the student's part (Bowdon and Scott 237). Especially useful for first-time service-learning practitioners, Bowdon and Scott's guidebook truncates the wide-ranging aspirations of service-learning pedagogues into this heuristic. The heuristic addresses the needs of the university, the academic department, the community partner, and the participating students—the four primary stakeholders in the service-learning project.

In WR 214 Writing in Business, Oregon State University and departmental outcomes and requirements guide students' expectations for the course. Students attempt to meet the learning outcomes of the university expressed in the Baccalaureate Core outcomes for Writing II courses; furthermore, they attempt to meet the WR 214 course-specific outcomes put forth by the School of Writing, Literature, and Film (designed to align with the professional communication discipline). The service-learning project introduces more expectations—INTO OSU's goals for the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program—into the course. More broadly, this project seeks to help students connect the many course outcomes to life-long values expressed by the university-wide Learning Goals for Graduates.

Moreover, the personal and professional development experience with INTO OSU is designed to help students balance the course learning outcomes with broader societal and professional values, in so doing constructing intersections between students' course experience and their life-long development. Thus, answering the first criteria of the Bowdon/Scott heuristic relating to course goals, for WR 214, is a complicated task.

The survey results presented in this chapter primarily address the first criteria, evaluating the ways in which the project did or did not directly relate to course goals. To a lesser extent, the survey seeks to address the second criteria by measuring the perceived benefits for students and their conversation partners. What follows is a guide through each research question and a presentation of the related results. The survey was completed by 20 of the 24 students enrolled. In the first section, I present the results to survey questions assessing the Learning Goals for Graduates. In the second section, I present results that assess students' perceived learning of cross-cultural communication by participating in the project. I transition to the second criteria—the project's ability to address a need in the community—in the third section, where I present the results to a question asking students to rate the perceived project benefits for them and their partners. Discussion will appear in two ways. First, results in each section will be followed by initial interpretations of the data. After presenting the results for the whole course, I will discuss three individual student experiences that highlight the most significant findings of the project. I arbitrarily assigned each student a gender to make discussion easier. The chapter concludes with a summary of the survey's major finding with a focus on project problems and successes.

Results of the survey's demographic and experience level questions contextualize the study. I draw on these demographics to illuminate further claims concerning the project outcomes. Students were first asked the following question: Before participating in the service-learning project at INTO OSU, have you ever had face-to-face conversations with a person from a non-English speaking country? All but one student answered yes. Students were then asked if they have had face-to-face conversations with a person from their partner's country of origin. To this question, the class was split evenly between yes and no. Finally, students were asked if they are from Oregon, to which 75% of the class answered yes and 25% answered no. These data indicate that most students in class had some experience communicating with someone from another culture and most students in class were from Oregon. Again, periodically throughout my analysis, I will refer to these data to deepen the discussion and analysis of the results.

Research Question 1
Assessing Perceptions OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates

Q: What effect did participating in the service-learning project through the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program have on students' understanding of OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates?

A: The service-learning project contributed most to students' understanding of the following three learning goals associated with global learning: knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences; global competence and understanding; and exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience.

Research Question 1 identifies the service-learning project's ability to meet institutional goals set for student learning, thereby gathering assessment evidence regarding certain Learning Goals for Graduates. The survey does not assess every learning goal—learning goals were included based on their connection to course content. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative data provides evidence of student perception about the project's effect on their development, represented by two survey questions. All 20 students participating in the survey responded to these questions. The responses provide a glimpse into the students' perception of the conceptually-based learning goals as a result of the service-learning experience.

On a five-point Likert scale, the first related survey question asks respondents to rate the service-learning project's contribution to students' understanding of the selected Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs). The following table shows the percentage results to this question.

Table 4.1 Contribution to LGG Understanding

LGGs	Very Large Extent	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	No Extent
<i>Understanding Diversity</i>	10%	35%	35%	20%	0%
<i>Collaboration</i>	15%	10%	50%	10%	15%
<i>Service</i>	10%	30%	40%	5%	15%
<i>Global Competence</i>	20%	25%	40%	15%	0%
<i>Exchanging Ideas</i>	20%	25%	35%	20%	0%

The majority of respondents perceived at least a moderate contribution to their understanding of each learning goal, indicating that the project addressed, at least to

some extent, each learning goal. Only in responding to the “collaboration” and “service” goals did any students select “no extent.” In all other cases, participation in the project increased understanding of the learning goals. The “global competence” and “exchanging ideas” goals received the most “very large extent” responses. Interestingly, 90% of students who had prior experience in face-to-face conversations with someone from their partner’s country of origin selected at least “moderate extent” for the three goals associated with global learning (knowledge and appreciation of diversity, global competence, and exchanging ideas with diverse audiences).⁹

These results suggest that the project saw greatest gains in being able to foster global learning. Perceived gains in understanding were greatest for the “knowledge and appreciation of diverse experiences,” “global competence,” and “exchanging ideas effectively with diverse audiences” goals. The structure of the course offers a likely explanation for the disparity in gains between these three goals and the other two. Students were introduced to the service-learning project through reading and discussing a chapter about cross-cultural communication from the course’s assigned text, *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* by Kitty Locker and Stephen Kaczmarek. This connected the project to specific business writing course content—cross-cultural communication—and implied to students that they should learn something about this content during the experience. Fewer gains made in understanding collaboration to meet a shared goal also comes of no surprise given the structure of the class assignments and the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. In class, I asked students to write about and discuss their experiences; though the final

⁹ For further corroboration of the evidence suggesting that students’ perceived the greatest growth towards the goals representing global learning and communication, see Table 4-6 in appendix C.

interview article required help from their partners, the students did the writing alone. Similarly, the Conversant Program did not require completion of any collaborative projects. Thus, gains in understanding of the learning goals connoting personal knowledge or skill, rather than social or collaborative action, were slightly higher. Nevertheless, responses indicate that even the “writing-about” pedagogical approach used in the study still led to gains in understanding of collaboration for all but three students. While one clear success of the project lies in growth in personal understanding, the project also shows potential to affect student learning through collaboration.

To provide additional data regarding development towards the learning goals, the second related survey question asks students to select the goal most affected by project participation and give reasons for that effect. The following table shows the percentage of students who selected each learning goal they perceived to be most supported by the project.

Table 4.2 Learning Goals Most Supported

Learning Goal	Percentage of Students
<i>Knowledge of Diversity</i>	20%
<i>Collaboration</i>	0%
<i>Service</i>	10%
<i>Global Competence</i>	15%
<i>Exchanging Ideas</i>	45%

Two respondents (10%) did not answer this question. These results reveal a clear divide between the “exchanging ideas” goal and the rest of the goals. Moreover, 80%

of the respondents selected a goal directly related to global learning. Of the students who selected the “exchanging ideas” goal, a large majority (78%) had prior experience in face-to-face conversations with someone from their partner’s country of origin. This suggests that students entering the project with more cross-cultural experience treated the conversations as a space for developing reciprocal relationships with their partners through exchange of ideas and clear communication. Students without the same level of experience were more likely to select either “knowledge of diverse experiences” or “global competence.” For these students, conversations with partners were sites for building cultural sensitivity skills that might enable them in future cross-cultural experiences to focus on building reciprocal relationships through clear communication.

The most frequent selection—the “exchanging ideas” goal—also elicited responses describing communication challenges caused by language difference followed by students’ perceived ability to overcome these communication challenges. Of the nine respondents to select this as the primary achievement, seven offered brief narrative explanations for the response. Of these seven responses, six mentioned a particular challenge that needed to be overcome for effective exchange of ideas. Challenges mentioned by respondents include lack of experience speaking with English language learners, level of the INTO conversant partner’s English proficiency, writing clear messages (presumably via email or text message), and having multiple partners at different English proficiency levels. The most frequently mentioned challenge related to the international student partners’ English proficiency, with three responses directly identifying the language barrier as the primary challenge. The following example response encapsulates the theme of most responses:

“With an INTO partner whose English isn’t as great as yours, you learn how to communicate effectively. You pick up what they do and don’t understand and using that information, you learn how to effectively communicate with your partner.” This example reflects the typical response structure—description of communication challenge followed by description of overcoming that challenge. These results suggest that the heightened awareness of intercultural communication difficulties contributed to developing communication skills.

The aforementioned example response is pedagogical, audience-centered, and informal in articulating communication strategies. The response is pedagogical in that the student implies that he/she is helping the partner understand English: “you pick up what they do and don’t understand” and use that information to improve understanding. The response is audience-centered because the student focuses communication efforts on the partner’s needs. Like other responses, this response hints at but does not articulate the specific strategy used to communicate more effectively, at least not formally. The student implies close listening as the strategy—“you pick up”—but does not clearly state it. This might indicate that these students gained some general proficiency via their conversations with INTO partners, but have not gained understanding at a level enabling them to articulate their cross-cultural communication experiences in terms of the discrete skills or strategies discussed in the course. The audience-centered nature of the above response reflects this notion: the student clearly states that he/she acts in an audience-centered way during the communicative experience, but does not articulate the term “audience analysis.” Even though the student does not articulate the term, the student indicates active application of audience analysis. It may also suggest that students perceived the conversations to

be informal rather than formal—social rather than professional. Informal conversations may indicate a different level of communication than the formality perceived in the professional communication context. Thus, some student responses like the one mentioned above did not articulate the “formal” concepts of communication.

Students frequently selected one of the goals related to global learning. The “knowledge of diversity” and “global competence” goals were the second and third most frequent selections, and the explanatory responses connected to each of these goals exhibit common characteristics. Seven respondents selected one of these goals; six of these respondents similarly indicated that they learned about their partners’ lives, cultures or countries. Below is a sampling from each of these six responses, along with the corresponding selected learning goal:

- “I liked learning about my partner’s life experiences.” (knowledge of diversity)
- “I took an interest in learning about the culture.” (knowledge of diversity)
- “My partner helped me understand not only how things were different in his country, but also how strange some of the traditions were in my own country.” (knowledge of diversity)
- “I learned about a country and culture radically different than my own.” (global competence)
- “I learned about the different points of views of another country.” (global competence)
- “I got to see where he was coming from.” (global competence)

In each response, the respondents indicated increased understanding of either another person's viewpoint or another culture's viewpoint, regardless of whether the respondent selected "knowledge of diversity" or "global competence." These responses suggest a common outcome to emphasize through project participation: cultural learning and ability to grasp the world through multiple perspectives.

The similarities among responses may suggest also that students conflated the two learning goals. This is likely a result of a lack of clear definition of "global competence" in the university goals. When I wrote the survey, "global competence and understanding" was listed as an add-on to the "service, citizenship, and social responsibility" goal. However, sometime between November and March, the goals were revised to clarify the phrase "global competence." The two versions are listed below, with the revisions in bold:

- Social Responsibility and Sustainability: You will develop life skills and values of service, citizenship, and social responsibility and demonstrate global competence and understanding. (Learning Goals for Graduates, November 2012)
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability: You will develop life skills and values of service, citizenship, and social responsibility, and demonstrate global competence **by understanding the interdependent nature of local and global communities.** (Learning Goals for Graduates, March 2013)

Using the wording from the first version, the survey perhaps lacked clarity; the responses indicate that students understood the definition of "global competence" to mean understanding of diverse personal or cultural viewpoint (not a far cry from knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of cultural, historical, and social

experiences). This suggests that, at the very least, these students met outcomes of service-learning described in the literature. Thomas Deans mentions “the ability to see things from multiple perspectives” as one of the primary outcomes of such pedagogy in the writing classroom (*Writing Partnerships* 3); in “On Reflection: The Role of Logs and Journals in Service-Learning Courses,” Chris Anson similarly suggests that service-learning pedagogy in the writing classroom often results in students “accommodating the unfamiliar into the familiar” (171). Indeed, perhaps the most positive impact of the program lies in its impact on personal global learning growth and personal ability to communicate in a multicultural environment.

The Likert scale section included a question regarding students’ perceived learning goal understanding through coursework completed **prior** to enrolling in WR 214. The question’s purpose was to compare perceived understanding before the service-learning experience with perceived understanding as a result of the service-learning experience. The following table shows the results of the question asking.

Table 4.3 Contribution of Prior OSU Coursework to LGG Understanding

LGGs	Very Large Extent	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	No Extent
<i>Understanding Diversity</i>	10%	40%	40%	15%	0%
<i>Collaboration</i>	40%	25%	15%	15%	5%
<i>Service</i>	15%	35%	20%	20%	10%
<i>Global Competence</i>	10%	35%	30%	20%	5%
<i>Exchanging Ideas</i>	15%	35%	25%	20%	5%

These data suggest that, in nearly all cases, previous OSU coursework did contribute to students' understanding of each goal to at least some extent. In particular, prior OSU coursework contributed significantly to students' understanding of collaboration. For the few students who perceived no contribution to global competence or exchanging ideas with a diverse audience in prior coursework, the project provided initial experience hopefully leading to further development in these values. The most significant perceived contribution from project participation was towards the goals related to global learning. Given that the WR 214 course focus is on communication (and that the service-learning project explicitly pushed students to learn about intercultural communication), students' understanding of the "exchanging ideas with diverse audiences" goal was the most influenced, especially for students who came with prior experience speaking to someone from their partner's country of origin. Students with less experience tended to perceive gains in personal knowledge and cultural understanding (i.e. "the knowledge of diverse experiences" and "global competence" goals). This may indicate scaffolding in student learning about intercultural communication.

In summary, the open-ended responses indicate that many students came away from the project with a greater understanding of the challenges of intercultural communication and built confidence in being able to address those challenges. In conversing and learning about their partners, students also perceived a greater understanding of audience and, with it, ability to see from multiple cultural perspectives. This evidence suggests that students did in fact make gains in global learning and understanding of intercultural communication. In the following section, I

will present evidence addressing what students learned specifically about intercultural communication through participation in the service-learning project.

Research Question 2
Assessing Perceived Learning of Course Content through Course Genres

Q: What business writing content did students perceive they learned through participation in the service-learning project and to what extent did the related business writing course assignments affect their perceived learning?

A: Though answers varied, students frequently mentioned the difficulty of intercultural communication and identified two strategies to address this difficulty: patience and simplifying language for clarity. Of the genres assigned, students identified the interview assignment as having the most effect on their learning.

The service-learning project expanded on the business writing course's existing cross-cultural communication component, making the topic a central focus. The "service-learning project" refers specifically to students' meetings and conversations with their INTO OSU partners through the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. The related business writing course assignments include two readings about cross-cultural communication, five assigned online blog posts, and an interview with INTO OSU partners written up as an article for a public relations newsletter. This research question follows up on the learning goals' question by addressing how students learned the cross-cultural communication content.

On a five-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the three related classroom assignments improved their understanding of cross-cultural communication. The following table shows the results.

Table 4.4 Contribution of Course Assignments to Student Learning

Activity	Very Large Extent	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	No Extent
<i>readings about cross-cultural communication</i>	10%	35%	25%	25%	5%
<i>writing online discussion posts about the conversations</i>	5%	25%	40%	20%	10%
<i>interviewing the partner and writing about the interview</i>	15%	35%	30%	5%	15%

The interview article assignment received the highest extent ratings. The mean response for the interview assignment was “moderate extent” effect on their understanding of cross-cultural communication. However, three students did not complete the interview, likely corresponding to the three students who selected “no extent.” When these three students are taken out of the results, the mean response increases to “large extent.” The online blog post assignment received the fewest selections of the two highest extent ratings, with 30% selecting either “very large extent” or “large extent.”¹⁰

Respondents’ tendency to select the interview article assignment as having greater impact on learning suggests that this assignment was more effective at teaching intercultural communication than reading or blogging. The assignment was inherently higher stakes—it was worth close to 20% of the course grade—than the

¹⁰ For further evidence of course assignment effect on cross-cultural communication learning, see Table 4-8 in Appendix C.

class readings (ungraded) and the online reflective writing (worth 10% of the course grade). Thus, students likely put more effort into it than they did the other assignments. The interview also required students to intentionally plan their conversations with their partners in order to learn specific information for their article. Most students chose to interview their partners about the personal transition made when moving to a new country and write a narrative of this transition. In general, the interviews did not focus on partners' future plans or an existing social problem requiring action related to the INTO OSU experience. This makes sense given the design of the project and the Likert-scale data suggesting greater development towards the learning goals associated with personal understanding versus the learning goals associated with social action. From the interview, students seemed to make gains in cross-cultural understanding and ability to see from multiple perspectives.

To get a fuller picture of student learning through the project, the survey included an open-ended question asking students to briefly explain what they learned about communicating with someone from another culture during their participation in the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. Students most frequently mentioned patience, understanding, or simplifying language for clarity as skills learned during the project; eight of the twenty respondents listed at least one of these skills. One such respondent stated that the project reinforced for him the importance of “not hurrying through a conversation.” Seven respondents wrote something specifically related to language; the following is a sampling of those responses:

- “I learned to censor my language to be more easily understood. I did this by editing out slang terms and common phrases that may have been confusing.”
- “I learned to be aware of slang and my body posture.”

- “I learned that I need to speak clearly and avoid complex words when working with someone who doesn’t speak English well.”

Four respondents stated that they learned the difficulty in communicating with someone from another country. Of these responses, one included a strategy for overcoming the communication difficulty: using simple language. Five students responded vaguely, indicating something learned but not offering any specific skill, strategy, or knowledge gained from project participation. One such respondent wrote that the project taught “which ways help you communicate more effectively.” While most respondents answered this question by reflecting on their own learning, two respondents identified a need for collective action as one learning outcome they gained from participation in the project. One respondent wrote “I feel that we, if we’re going to invest in these students, give them better support—not financially—in regards to meeting other students. They seem sheltered there [INTO OSU].” These responses are surprises since the project did not make collective action a central goal; several other respondents identified learning about the needs of their individual partners or English Language Learners generally, but did not call for collective action as indicated by use of the “we” pronoun.

Students’ focus on individual growth in personal qualities (patience) and effective communication skills (clarity) rather than collective action is congruent with the purposes of the project design. They were asked to write guided reflections and progress reports about their *individual* experience with their international student partners; the newsletter article required an *individual* interview, which in most cases was used to write a narrative about the international student partners’ experiences. Through these individual reflections and assignments, students would hopefully

develop greater meta-cognitive awareness of their learning and stronger sense of cross-cultural communication. The open-ended responses suggest that many students perceived achieving these goals. However, the one- to two-sentence responses often lacked clear articulation of specific communication strategies learned through the project, at least using the formal terms presented in class.¹¹ This does not discount the clear learning successes; it might simply suggest that students perceived the survey to be a space to express broad, conceptual learning gains. In particular, the several mentions of gains in patience express significant thinking with regards to cross-cultural and business communication; these responses reflect what service-learning scholar James Dubinsky identifies as a shift towards “conduct rather than production” in students’ understanding (259). Moreover, even though only two students mentioned a need for collective action to improve the lives of international students on campus, these responses merit attention. Calls for collective action were not included in assignment or survey design; the observed mention of collective action suggests this could be a goal for future projects. To emphasize such a goal, one might include an additional survey question asking students to report any insights they gained about improving international student experience at OSU.

The final survey question gave respondents space to write anything else they would like to about the service-learning experience. Of the eleven students who responded to the question, two wrote answers relevant to learning cross-cultural communication. Both, in very distinct ways, compared the project’s structure (learning through conversation) to other methods of learning the material:

¹¹ WR 214 relied heavily on the PAIBOC schema for analyzing rhetorical situations. PAIBOC stands for: Purpose, Audience, Information, Benefits, Objections, and Context.

- “It is a great way to learn about a culture through a native. I learned much more than I would have through a book or lecture.”
- “I feel with the connections on the internet that cross-cultural communication is already a natural talent and we won’t need much help learning it.”

Taken together, these comments suggest that these two respondents not only assessed their individual learning, but also identified the pedagogy through which they learned. In the first response, the student articulates an implied premise of the service-learning project: learning to communicate across cultures happens most effectively by active experience with a representative of that culture. The second comment suggests that these active experiences already happen online, thus challenging the central purpose of the service-learning project (and the inclusion of the targeted cross-cultural content area). At the very least, these students engaged with the various potential methods that might improve understanding of the content. In this way, these two respondents identified the purpose of the service-learning project as well as one purpose of the survey itself (to evaluate the service-learning project for potential future uses). These two responses hint at the central question faced by every teacher: what class activity will most impact learning?

Research Question 3 **Assessing Perceived Benefits to Students and to Partners**

Q: To what extent did students perceive that the service-learning project benefitted both themselves and their international student partners?

A: By and large, students perceived greater benefits for their partners than for themselves through participation in the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program.

In order for the Conversant Program to have a chance at effectively addressing the international students' needs, it needs local community members to volunteer. The above question assesses students' perception of the benefits of their volunteering in order to address, at least in part, the ability of the Conversant Program to fulfill the needs of its participants. In "Voices from the Community: A Case for Reciprocity in Service-Learning," Lucia d'Arlach, Bernadette Sanchez, and Rachel Feuer argue for reciprocal service-learning relationships—both students and community members should benefit from the project. The associated survey question asks students to assess benefits to both participating parties. However, in the survey design, I made the assumption that students would equate benefits to themselves with learning, when this is not necessarily the case. Students could have just as easily perceived the term 'benefits' to mean enjoyment, monetary gain, or a number of other things. Thus, while this question does effectively compare student benefits with partner benefits, the term's vagueness means that it does not address exactly what students or partners benefitted.

Nineteen of twenty respondents answered the corresponding survey question: in your opinion, to what extent did you and your partner benefit from your participation in the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassadors Program? The following table presents the results.

Table 4.5 Perceived Student and Partner Benefits

	Very Large Extent	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	No Extent
Student Benefits	5%	10%	55%	25%	0%
Partner Benefits	15%	30%	35%	15%	0%

All respondents reported at least some benefits.¹² The majority of respondents chose “moderate” personal benefits from their participation. Respondents tended to report that their international student partners benefitted to a greater extent than they did. Of the 14 students who selected at least “moderate” benefits, 11 are from Oregon. Students not from Oregon were more likely to select “small” or “no” extent. Of the 5 students not from Oregon, 3 reported little or no benefits. Moreover, these students each responded with criticism in the final survey question asking them to write anything else about the experience. Students without any experience conversing with someone from their partner’s country of origin predominantly reported at least moderate benefits (80%). These data suggest that those from Oregon and with less intercultural communication experience tend to benefit from the project more than students with more extensive experience.

In the final open-ended survey question, two respondents chose to comment specifically about benefits for participants. One remarked on the complete lack of mutual benefits, writing “I think our partners get the most benefit from this experience and I feel I almost get nothing.” This comment reflects the respondent’s answers to the Likert-scale benefits question: the respondent selected “small extent” for personal benefits and “very large extent” for partner benefits. Another respondent offered harsher critique of the service-learning project’s mandatory nature, writing “matching an INTO student with a partner who does not want to volunteer makes the experience less beneficial for both parties.” This student did not respond to the Likert-scale benefits question and responded with either “small extent” or “no extent” to all other Likert-scale questions (including the question asking respondents to rate the extent to

¹² One student did not respond to this question.

which prior OSU courses contributed to understanding of the learning goals).

Interestingly, the respondent also mentioned an inability to find “common ground” with the partner, admitting that this led to frustration and dissatisfaction with the project generally. These responses show consistent dissatisfaction with the project.

Results regarding benefits to both parties indicate that many students felt they met the needs of their international student partners more so than the project’s inclusion in business writing benefitted them. This suggests that, in general, students felt they fulfilled their role in the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. Though these students did not comment specifically on why they perceived that their partners benefitted to a greater extent from the project, the frequent disparity in perceived benefits might stem from many sources. Potential reasons include: sense of forced volunteerism, resentment towards extra work, disconnection from business writing, desire for the project to earn a higher grade percentage, or lack of enjoyment during the conversations. With all of these potential challenges and tensions created by the project, it is important to remember that the vast majority of students perceived at least moderate benefits from participating as a cultural ambassador. Perhaps the most significant discovery from these results is that the term “benefits” could be clarified and students could be asked what the benefits to them are by participating in the project.

A Sampling of Student Experiences

The data and broad patterns described above are vital to project assessment, but they may gloss over the experience of individual students. Furthermore, the small sampling size (20 students) prevents firm conclusions from being made using only

such a broad view of the survey results. Ultimately, the project's highly-individualized nature harkens analysis of specific individual experiences. In the following section, I will highlight three very different individual student experiences as expressed in their survey responses, emphasizing the individual nature of the service-learning project. Students' experiences in the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program were indeed diverse and dependent upon a variety of factors within and outside of the students' control. Students entered the project with differing levels of experience and expectations for the course. Partners differed in age, English proficiency, and willingness to participate. The following profiles illuminate the various successes, challenges, and tensions that arose during the project.

Student A, a student from Oregon with previous experience speaking face-to-face with someone from his partner's country of origin, highlights the most significant problem with not only this service-learning project, but service-learning projects generally: the sense of forced volunteerism. In the final open-ended question asking for any remaining feedback, the student stated directly the potential problem of forced volunteerism: "I think it is a great volunteer experience, but having it as a mandatory class assignment takes away from the goals of the program. Matching an INTO student with a partner who does not want to volunteer makes the experience less beneficial for both parties." This charge against making the project a required assignment is not unique to this service-learning project; several scholars discuss forced volunteerism as the central problem with service-learning pedagogy (Bacon, 1997; Duffy, 2010; Hamler Carrick et. al, 2000; Morton, 2010).¹³ This response

¹³ In "Rupture: Acknowledging the Lost Subjects of the Service Learning Story," Tracy Hamler Carrick, Margaret Himley, and Tobi Jacobi discuss forced volunteerism, which students often determine is not volunteerism at all, as one of many breaks from the ideal service-learning narrative—

points to the importance of student investment in the project; students ideally would be willing to spend the extra time to meet with their partners and not view the project as just a mandatory class assignment. The forced volunteerism charge cannot be resolved fully; all service-learning projects risk this type of student resistance.

Student A's critique of the service-learning project is congruent with the rest of his responses to the other survey questions, providing a clear view into the student's frustration with the project. In responses to the project's contribution to understanding of the various Learning Goals for Graduates relevant to the project, the student selected either small or no extent; these responses matched identically the student's responses to prior coursework's contribution to understanding of the learning goals. For contribution to understanding of the goals associated with global learning (knowledge and appreciation of diversity, global competence, and exchanging ideas effectively with diverse audiences), the student selected small extent. Student A perceived that the project (and other OSU coursework) had little impact on his understanding of these broad goals. The student states perceived lack of learning directly, saying "the program did not teach me anything about cross cultural communication that I didn't already know." Additionally, the student was one of three students to respond that the interview article assignment had no effect on learning cross-cultural communication, perhaps because he did not complete that assignment.¹⁴

The dissatisfaction might be explained by the lack of similarities discovered between the student and the partner: "I found that although we got along, neither of us found a

one that is unavoidable. They advocate encouraging students to discuss the relative merits of forced volunteerism so as to help improve and transform service-learning experiences and encourage students to help write the real narrative of their service-learning experiences (303-304).

¹⁴ Coincidentally, three students did not complete the interview with their partners for various reasons. While the survey does not indicate if the three students who did not complete the interview were these three students, this seems likely the case.

common ground, which made the program slightly frustrating.” This is the risk of pairing individuals together—they may not enjoy each other’s company. The two potential pitfalls that this student expresses—forced volunteerism and inability to find common ground—are a necessary risk. However, the latter pitfall at least does not appear to be a determining factor in the students’ experiences during the project; of the five students who mentioned not being able to find something in common with their partners, three also stated that both they and their partners benefitted at least moderately from the Conversant Program.¹⁵ For student A, it seems that a combination of feeling resentful towards being required to participate in service and not developing a strong connection with the international student partner led to the poor experience.

Student B selected moderate contribution towards understanding of all but one of the learning goals through participating in the project (this student perceived small contribution to their understanding of global competence). For three goals—knowledge and appreciation of diversity, service, and exchanging ideas with diverse audiences—this contribution was an improvement upon small contributions perceived through prior coursework at OSU. Student B—someone from Oregon without any experience speaking with someone from their partner’s country of origin—selected exchanging ideas with diverse audiences (the most frequent class response) as the most affected goal. In the explanation for this selection, the student writes that “communicating with somebody that speaks English as a second language can be *difficult*. You have to work through certain topics to help them understand.” As with many other students, this student identified the difficulty of communicating with

¹⁵ The student discussed in depth here did not respond to the question asking for a rating of personal and partner benefits through participation in the program.

someone learning English and adopted the role of ambassador/helper in dealing with this difficulty.

Moreover, Student B perceived personal growth in their ability to understand other cultures and see from multiple perspectives. When asked what was learned, the student responded “I learned that different cultures have different forms of communication and norms. Some things we do in America can be seen as offensive to different cultures.” This suggests growth in cultural sensitivity and the ability to see from the partner’s perspective. Furthermore, given that the student perceived being able to exchange ideas effectively with the partner (or at least developing greater ability), learning cultural sensitivity was likely connected with communicative action during the project. The student reported that both the readings and the interview article assignment contributed a large extent to learning cross-cultural communication. Further proof that the project was generally a positive experience (in addition to impacting learning) comes with the student’s success in finding common interests like “games and certain sports” with the partner. Student B felt that the online blog assignment had a small contribution to learning; like 45% of the class, the student felt that the interview assignment had greater influence on learning intercultural communication. For this student, the project was a positive learning experience that impacted the understanding of communication and global learning goals, as well as cultural sensitivity, but the project could have had more impact.

Student C, a student from Oregon with no experience speaking to someone from the partner’s country of origin, benefitted to a large extent by participating in the service-learning project. In particular, the experience had significant impact on the student’s understanding of the global learning goals. Coursework prior to the project

contributed moderately to student C's knowledge and appreciation of diverse experiences and a small extent to both global competence and ability to exchange ideas effectively with diverse audiences. Participating in the project contributed a large extent to both the student's knowledge and appreciation of diverse experiences and global competence; the project contributed a moderate extent to the student's understanding of exchanging ideas effectively with diverse audiences. The student perceived greatest growth in knowledge and appreciation of diverse experiences, saying that he/she "took an interest in learning" about the partner's culture and that the partner "loved talking about it." The two conversation partners "shared an enthusiasm for American cinema," providing further evidence that the student found the project to be an enjoyable and positive experience. This student strongly supported the project and was greatly impacted by it: "It is a great way to learn about a culture through a native. I learned much more than I would have through a book or lecture." In this example, the service-learning project helped the student connect with both the university's educational goals and the course content.

Not only did the student identify learning gains and express satisfaction with the project, the student also reported that each classroom activity associated with the project contributed to learning to at least a moderate extent. The interview article assignment had the most impact; the student reported that this assignment affected learning to a large extent. Moreover, survey responses suggest that the student sensed he/she was collaborating towards a common goal with the partner during the interview; the student reported that the project affected understanding of collaboration to a very large extent. The student reported equally large benefits for the partner. The combination of the student's response to collaboration, the student's successful ability

to find commonalities with the partner, and the perceived equal benefits confirm that this was a successful and fruitful conversation partnership, one in which both partners bought into the program with invested interest. The student did not just enjoy the project, he/she approached it intentionally, noting that intercultural communication “can be difficult” and mentioning the need to choose vocabulary carefully. For this student, the project’s difficulty did not derail the experience; rather, it enriched the student’s learning.

Conclusion: Successes and Challenges

As student C ‘s experience suggests, the service-learning project has the potential to be an enriching experience that addresses the interrelated global learning and communication goals. Moreover, the interview assignment appears to be a helpful activity for addressing these goals and bridging cultural differences. Frequently, when students perceived development towards one goal, they often perceived development towards another. That is, increased knowledge of another culture connects to ability to communicate with diverse audiences. Evidence from the survey further suggests that students gained ability to see the world from multiple perspectives, so I would add cultural sensitivity to the list of interconnected goals that the service-learning project addresses. Not to be forgotten in this experience were the frequent mentions of moderate, large, or very large benefits for the international student partners.

However, the highly individualized nature of the project was dependent on the students’ and their partners’ investment in the Conversant Program, as seen in survey responses. Students who sensed an impact on their learning to a lesser extent than others brought up three problems that hindered the project’s effectiveness: two did not

perceive the connection to business writing, five did not find commonalities with the partner, and one disagreed with the forced nature of the service. Each of these reasons could potentially derail the project for the students. Only the first potentially lies within the control of the teacher, though the other two can be alleviated through recurrent discussion and encouragement. Perhaps the most important thing for an instructor seeking to incorporate this or a similar service-learning pedagogy is to reinforce frequently the connection of the project to course goals. For business writing, this means drawing upon the importance of, perhaps predominantly, “exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience.” The project shows effectiveness in connecting students with these goals, but shows room for improvement in helping students fully articulate the connection of these goals to effective professional communication and business writing. The focus of the survey presented in this chapter was primarily on the Learning Goals for Graduates, which reflected a purpose of the project to connect the course with societal values.

Perhaps, then, a successful experience through this particular service-learning project might be measured by the extent to which students were able to embrace the importance of societal values. By emphasizing the learning goals in the course and the case study, I hoped to broaden the scope of WR 214 Writing in Business beyond its focus on learning skills. I hoped students would not just learn to analyze an audience to produce an effective piece of written communication, but that they would connect audience analysis with conducting themselves in a socially responsible and culturally sensitive way. Rather than supporting practical, vocational skills, the service-learning project shows potential for connecting these practical skills with broader global

contexts and social purposes. Focus on the learning goals asks students to place educational experiences like this on a timeline that spans beyond WR 214 and into civic, professional, and personal life. Stretching this skills-based course by introducing an experiential learning pedagogy necessarily made the course more complicated for both the students and the instructor to navigate. In the following chapter, I will introduce activity systems theory as a lens for unraveling the complexity of the course and exploring the tensions created.

Chapter 5: Navigating Motives and Contradictions: An Activity Systems Reading of Service-Learning in Writing in Business

When people are at cross-purposes, pulled by contradictory objects and motives, systems are stretched, and sometimes fundamentally transformed.

David Russell, “Rethinking Genre in School and Society”

In implementing the service-learning project, I sought to bridge various gaps: gaps between student and partner cultural difference and gaps between the vocational skills taught in WR 214 and a broader multicultural context. As instructor of the course, I stretched the classroom beyond its intense focus on teaching vocational, communication skills in order to connect those skills with multicultural settings. My push towards global learning purposely added complexity to the business writing course; for students to situate the skills of business writing within a broader global and educational context, a complex pedagogical approach is necessary. Through this approach, I hoped to accommodate both the practical skills and the conceptual values of a Liberal Arts education. I argue that introducing a pedagogy based on developing societal values such as those expressed by the Learning Goals for Graduates into a course so focused on practical skill-building increases the impact of the course. Yet the service-learning component added complexity to an already full curriculum, thereby increasing the responsibilities for student and teacher. In this chapter, I explore this increased complexity and responsibility using activity systems theory as a frame. The theory works as a mechanism for mapping interactions and tensions that occurred in this service-learning course for both the students and the instructor.

In “Rethinking Genre,” David Russell weaves together activity systems theory with genres of writing—in the process, he defines activity systems and argues for its

usefulness in analyzing the complexities of the university writing classroom. Russell defines an activity system as “any collective, ongoing, object-directed, historically-conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated human interaction” (“Rethinking Genre”). An activity system includes subjects, objects (or goals), and tools that mediate subject-object interactions. One example of an activity system is the writing classroom: it is ongoing in that students and teacher interact repeatedly; it is object-directed in that every classroom has objects (learning goals or outcomes) that guide interactions; it is historically-conditioned in that it exists because of surrounding historical and material realities; it is dialectically structured because the subjects (students and teacher), objects (learning goals), and tools (genres of writing) have reciprocal interactions with each other; and it is tool-mediated because the interactions between subjects within the writing classroom and their objects are mediated by material genres of writing. The tools, or genres, work within an activity system as means for subjects to achieve or address the system’s motives. In this chapter, I use activity systems theory as a lens for analyzing the case study, thus offering a way to interpret and understand the ways in which students acted within the service-learning classroom to navigate the various classroom outcomes.

In addition to relying on Russell’s definition of activity systems, I build on Thomas Deans’ work in “Shifting Locations, Genres, and Motives: An Activity Theory Analysis of Service-Learning Writing Pedagogies,” in which he outlines the service-learning writing classroom as an activity system, paying particular attention to the transformed interactions between genres and motives (or outcomes) and the tensions created for the student and teacher. Deans conflates the term ‘motives’ with the term ‘outcomes,’ arguing that for a classroom activity system, curricular outcomes

operate as the socially-conditioned motives of that system. For Deans, activity systems theory helps explain the relationship between students' actions (through their writing) and their multiple social contexts.

In this case study, students and instructor faced multiple activity systems within which they were required to act: the university system, with degree requirements and institutional goals; the professional communication disciplinary system, needing effective professional and business writers; and the INTO OSU corporate educational system, needing to satisfy its international student population. My analysis begins with the service-learning writing classroom as a dynamic activity system, using the various outcomes that students interacted with during the class as an entry point.¹⁶ In particular, I examine how students navigated the various outcomes via the service-learning project. Following this discussion, I turn my attention to the tensions that these multiple motives created for students and, using survey comments, the ways in which students identified or navigated these tensions. The chapter continues with a discussion of the genres of writing (or tools) used in the service-learning project. I conclude the chapter with a personal narrative, mapping the activity systems from my perspective as the instructor.

Outcomes and Interactions in the Service-Learning Activity System

Any one of the three primary components of an activity system—the subject, the tools, or the outcomes—can serve as an entry point for analysis. In the following section, I trace the various outcomes at work in the classroom—each part of a distinct

¹⁶ The previous chapter's results presented these motives (or outcomes) that students faced, including the Learning Goals for Graduates, the cross-cultural communication course content outcome, and the need to help the international student partner.

activity system—through the experience of one student as represented by her survey responses. I have two purposes for this tracing: first, to map the activity system emerging from this service-learning classroom; second, to illuminate the interactions and overlaps among the various activity systems in order to suggest the service-learning project's ability to help students navigate the expectations placed upon them. Although activity systems theory can be used to analyze activity and action at the collective level, my analysis in this section focuses on the individual student level due to the individualized nature of the service-learning project. As mentioned elsewhere in the case study, the WR 214 Writing in Business classroom lies, in many ways, at the epicenter of differing institutional outcomes. These outcomes include the newly-adopted university-wide Learning Goals for Graduates, the Baccalaureate Core general education outcomes for a Writing II course, and the WR 214-specific outcomes put forth by the School of Writing, Literature, and Film to approximate the motives of the professional communications field.¹⁷ By using activity systems theory as an analytical frame, I show how the service-learning project can help students navigate these outcomes by creating and emphasizing overlaps, even while such a project introduces new INTO OSU institutional outcomes not usually included in the course.

The service-learning project shows potential to help students navigate, or mediate, differing activity systems. This is perhaps best seen by beginning with the overlaps among outcomes represented by two key areas: global learning and communication. As presented earlier, the Learning Goals for Graduates emphasize global learning. This overlaps with the Baccalaureate Core outcome placed on the

¹⁷ A complete list of these goals and outcomes appears in Appendix A.

class asking students to “write effectively for diverse audiences.” Likewise, global learning and this notion of diverse audiences is prevalent in WR 214 and its corresponding discipline; a WR 214 outcome states that students will demonstrate knowledge of audience, while the professional communication world is increasingly emphasizing the pervasive need to teach intercultural communication (Devoss et. al, 2002; Hansen, 2004; Herrington, 2010; Starke-Meyerring, 2005; Thrush, 2004). These overlapping outcomes link together the university, the classroom, and the professional communication activity systems. Furthermore, INTO OSU’s motives for the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program include, in addition to providing the international students in the INTO system greater exposure to native English speakers, three of the Learning Goals central to this case study: Pluralism and Cultural Legacies, Collaboration, and Communication (“Passport”). Results from the survey suggest the service-learning project’s potential for helping students navigate these systems. The three Learning Goals most frequently identified by students as most affected by the project were those related to global learning; the fact that “exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience” was selected most frequently highlights the project’s ability to emphasize the interactions between activity systems present.

Activity systems theory, though, is not merely about how students meet outcomes; the theory helps track the ways in which people operate within and among systems to increase their involvement. Clay Spinuzzi suggests such a point in *Network: Theorizing Knowledge Work in Telecommunications*, stating that activity theory is “preoccupied with how people work: how individuals work in collectives to develop tools, practices, communities, rules, and divisions of labor as they cyclically

transform the objects of their labor” (42). Therefore, by tracing a particular student’s experience, I hope to highlight the project’s ability to help students navigate multiple outcomes and, thereby, potentially increase involvement within the associated systems of activity. Furthermore, through this analysis, I emphasize the interaction between students and these activity systems to show that students can effect change among activity systems just as activity systems require certain activity of students. I turn now to one student’s survey responses to track them along the service-learning classroom’s motives.

Communicating with diverse audiences provides one intersection between each activity system interacting in the course. In selecting “exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience,” one student (student D) responded with the following: “writing different messages based on what my partner tells me requires experiencing a large amount of clear ideas. If there are no clear ideas being shared, communication fails.” Here, student D appropriated the importance of the communication Learning Goal—a goal shared by OSU and INTO OSU’s Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program—and emphasized the project’s helpfulness as a tool for realizing that goal. Effective written communication for diverse audiences also appears as an outcome of the Baccalaureate Core curriculum for the course, further solidifying it as a point of intersection effectively identified by student D. The student argues that clarity is essential to the effectiveness of the written messages, or genres (I will return to a lengthier discussion of genre in the latter section of this chapter), as mediating tools between her and the motives for the course.

While identifying the intersection among activity systems emphasized by the service-learning project, student D also reflects on a shifting mindset: “I learned I have a long way to go. There is more to life than just learning stuff. It is gaining valuable knowledge and skills not just good grades.” This comment clearly states that student D is looking towards life-long values like the ones the learning goals express, indicating a shift in conceptual frames towards the humanistic learning goals. Furthermore, through this comment, the student is seeking to balance the immediate, classroom system motive of achieving a particular grade with the other motives of the course and the service-learning project. The comment suggests that the student’s involvement with the service-learning activity system helped inculcate a sense of learning as a life-long project, rather than something achievable within one term of coursework.

Interestingly, student D did not find much in common with her partner, stating that “he was a married man and a father. He is focused on much more important things than I am.” This comment suggests that the student also appropriated a motive designated by the department for WR 214—to use knowledge of audience—in order to realize a greater insight and communicate more effectively. In this way, the student’s engagement in the service-learning project led to greater insight into her own values because she recognized a difference between her value system and her partner’s value system.

Student D’s example highlights the potential of the project (and likely other service-learning projects) to provide students with a way to identify the intersections between multiple realms of activity that guide their experience in the writing course. Yet, not all students identified how the motives for the course intersected while

participating in the service-learning project. As a site with various activity systems interacting and sometimes conflicting, the business writing classroom necessarily creates contradictions for some students. David Russell identifies this characteristic, noting that “activity systems experience dialectical contradictions, as other activity systems pull them [students] toward some new motive” (“Rethinking Genre”). For both Russell and Deans, contradictions serve as important nodes of analysis in applying activity theory to understanding complex systems at work. Deans suggests that contradictions are “natural to activity systems and should not necessarily be tagged as negative” (460). One such potential contradiction in WR 214 is between the Baccalaureate Core curriculum motives for the course and the broader university motives for the course expressed by the Learning Goals for Graduates. Curricular motives, articulated as learning outcomes, suggest to students that a particular input in the course will lead to a particular learning output; that is, students will attain an achievable and measurable skill or ability. The university-wide Learning Goals, however, indicate values that can only be encouraged, practiced, fostered, and inculcated, but never fully achieved. With this in mind, the previous student example illuminated the service-learning project’s potential to help balance these differing motives. By commenting that the project helped her learn that educational outcomes are not just tied to course grades, but that education is about “learning *valuable* knowledge and skills,” student D’s experience proved productive *because of* the tension between multiple motives.

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Tensions in the Service-Learning Activity System

Introducing service-learning also introduces a new, central contradiction that serves as another point of analysis. As subjects within this service-learning course activity system, students must fulfill potentially contradictory roles: student seeking to fulfill classroom expectations and ambassador seeking to fulfill INTO OSU expectations. According to Deans, such an inherent contradiction can place students in “double binds” that can sometimes be accommodated, sometimes prove disruptive or debilitating, and sometimes spark collective transformation (460). Here, Deans uses the term “double-binds” to refer to the situation student-writers can be caught in when a writing course has multiple motives or outcomes that pull the students (as subjects of the activity system) in opposing directions. In WR 214, fulfilling the role of ambassador and the role of student inherently holds tension, potentially placing students in “double-binds” that can either be productively accommodated or become disruptive. During this project, tension between roles became manifest among some students as a tension between enjoying the project and learning from the project. That is, conversations with partners occurred outside of class time and were frequently seen as taking place within a social context rather than an academic context. With the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program, INTO OSU hoped in part to create an enjoyable social experience for their international students that would help them integrate with social life on campus. WR 214 students were then asked to adopt this purpose while also adopting the cross-cultural learning goals proposed in the classroom.

To further explore the tension between enjoyment and learning, I turn to three examples from the survey results in which students associated their roles in the

project with enjoyment. One student—student E—expresses both an expectation that the project should be fun and disappointment in not meeting that expectation, explaining “I did not like my partners because we couldn’t connect. I wasn’t able to enjoy the program because all of my time was devoted to school.” For student E, the perceived role as ambassador was set in a social context and meant to include fun. This perception stood at odds with student E’s role as student and learner and disrupted the student’s experience. The student reported small or no contribution to his development in all but the global competence Learning Goal; furthermore, the student reported small benefits from participating in the project. Yet, student E also mentioned that he learned to “be patient” and to simplify language during the conversations. Moreover, he “liked learning about [his] partner’s life experiences.” Though the student learned something about cross-cultural communication, lack of enjoyment colored the experience as negative. In this case, the service-learning project introduced a contradiction in roles that student E perceived as disruptive. As a student, he needed to study; as a cultural ambassador, he expected enjoyment. These two motives connected, for him, competing activity systems, creating a tension that interfered with his learning through the experience. Student E’s role as student challenged his involvement in the service-learning project. Rather than helping this student navigate multiple motives, the service-learning project introduced motives that placed him in an unresolved double-bind.

Another student, student F, identified directly the potential contradiction introduced by the project, stating that the project was “fun, but I feel that it wasn’t related to business writing.” Here again, student F expresses an understanding of two clashing roles at work during the project—the fun, social role of the ambassador in

contradiction with the learner role of the business writing student. Interestingly, student F also mentions learning to “be aware of slang and [her] body posture.” This response indicates that the student considered her role to be somewhat professional; furthermore, it relates to a specific WR 214 course outcome stating that students should learn to present themselves as professionals. This indicates an intersection between the professional communication activity system and the Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program, yet the student did not identify this connection. The perceived expectation of a fun social setting was met but not accommodated into the classroom system of activity.

For student G, enjoying the experience and learning about cross-cultural communication were not in tension. Unlike student E, student G did not view having fun and learning in opposition to each other. In his final response to the project, student G wrote “fun experience!” The student also identifies specific reasons for enjoying the project, saying that he liked talking about “sports and music” with his partner. Instead of the project’s social context opposing activity unrelated to business writing, the social context seems to inform student G’s cross-cultural learning. The student perceived that the project contributed largely to understanding of effective communication, global competence, and knowledge of diversity. The student also states that each assignment related to the project contributed to a large extent to his learning. The potential contradiction between the social context of the conversations and the academic context seems to be either resolved or nonexistent for this student. Of his learning, the student wrote that he learned “which ways help you communicate more effectively.” This suggests that the student perceived a learning increase amidst a social context through persistence, applying multiple means of communication until

one worked. This may also suggest that the contradiction never came to fruition, and the tension between the social and academic contexts stretched the classroom activity system in a productive way for this student.

Genres in the Service-Learning Activity System

Tensions between differing contexts and overlapping activity systems affect the way that students use genres in order to address the multiple motives of the course. Activity systems theory, as laid out by Russell, can help explain human behavior when faced with multiple systems and contradictory goals. He brings his analysis to the genre level by synthesizing activity theory with Charles Bazerman's theory of genre systems. For Bazerman, genres "identify a repertoire of actions... Thus, they embody the social intentions toward which one may orient one's energies" (80). That is, genres signify actions that are meant to achieve or address particular social motives, instead of signifying specific styles, conventions, or formats inherent to a text. Russell synthesizes this sense of genre with the tools of activity theory, giving writing classroom researchers a way to analyze genres as dynamic tools used by students to increase involvement in one or more activity systems. For Russell, genres within an activity systems framework can help bridge the analytical distance between social practices outside of the classroom and interactions within the classroom ("Rethinking Genre"). Therefore, analyzing genre becomes a powerfully important project for service-learning researchers because it can reveal the ways in which students comprehend the interactions between classroom and community. Thomas Deans iterates this point in "Shifting Locations," stating that because genres are the tools student-writers use to accomplish actions, examining genres can help us

understand the extent to which students become involved in multiple activity systems (455).

The service-learning project injected two new tools into the existing business writing classroom activity system: narrative and reflective writing. As depicted by the results in the previous chapter, most students identified the interview assignment as having greater impact on their learning than the blog assignment. The interview assignment combined a narrative-based genre with a public relations genre. The assignment introduced narrative by requiring the students to become the agents presenting a story of their partners' lives and integrating those stories into newsletter documents. This assignment presented students with the challenge of integrating a genre common to service-learning, one that some service-learning scholars argue can help students' bridge cultural gaps to understand the lives of those from other cultures, with a genre common to professional communication.¹⁸ The assignment sought to uphold the motives of one activity system (multicultural service-learning) while addressing the motives of another (professional communication). The single text was meant to mediate their involvement in multiple systems. In this way, the service-learning project stretched the professional communication activity system (approximated by WR 214).

As the central writing tool linking the cultural ambassador experience with the classroom, the reflective writing assignment consisted of an online blog only accessible to members of the class. Students posted five responses throughout the term in which they were asked to reflect on the experience while addressing a specific

¹⁸ For examples and discussions of narrative in service-learning, see the following sources: Green, 2003; Mariner, 2011; Micer, et. al, 2008; Vaccaro, 2011.

prompt.¹⁹ As a key component of the service-learning pedagogy, these reflective responses were meant to serve as a space for students to accommodate “the unfamiliar into the familiar” (Anson 171). The blog assignment as explained to students combined the critical reflection genre common to service-learning with the progress report genre practiced in professional communication. This is an example of what Russell identifies as one activity system introducing a new written genre in another “to mediate change” (“Rethinking Genre”). In this case, the change to the classroom activity system—the service project—must be reconciled in some way. In one sense, the blog seemed to act as a hybrid genre—what Russell calls a complete rupture in a system of genres (“Rethinking Genre”).

Frequent student comments in the blog suggesting a tension (and sometimes contradiction) between the social setting of the INTO OSU activity system and the educational setting of the classroom exemplify this notion of rupture. The writing as assigned asked students to incorporate reflection—a type of writing focused on the writer in a discipline focused largely on the reader or the user of professional documents. Furthermore, unlike the progress report (a business writing staple), reflective writing is never mentioned in the assigned textbook (Locker and Kaczmarek, 2011). Thus, this reflection, hybridized with the frequently used progress report, created a break from the WR 214 and professional communication activity systems; the writing signified for students a type of activity not common in this context. The progress report signified the students’ participation as cultural ambassadors; the reflective writing asked students to connect their experience with

¹⁹ For example, the first prompt asked students to describe their initial conversations with partners and answer the one or both of the following questions: “What, if anything surprised you? Did the class reading on cross-cultural communication help prepare you? Why or why not?”

either personal or broader social significance. In this way, the blog operated as a single text “mediating the actions of participants in more than one activity system” (“Rethinking Genre”).

Given that the blog post assignment’s goal was to bridge the social context and the classroom context—thus mediating the tension between the two—it is fruitful to look back at those students who directly identified these two contexts in their survey comments (i.e. students E and G). Student E noted that the blog post assignment had “small” effect on his learning. This may indicate that the student did not integrate the social setting with the educational setting nor appropriate the blog assignment as a tool for increasing involvement. Student G noted that the blog posts had “large” effect on his learning. This may indicate that the student effectively used this genre as a tool for integrating the seemingly disparate activities of the service-learning classroom. At the very least, the contrasting attitudes of student E and student G manifest at the genre level; that is, they become evident by reactions to the assignment.

Since I assigned the online blog as a means of bridging the service-learning experience and course content, the genre became a locus of tension that arose between social and academic activity systems. In early blog entries, many students identified this social/academic tension; the INTO OSU activity system, to them, was a social context with motives separate from the motives of the WR 214 activity system. In response, later blog prompts asked students to draw connections between the business writing content and the conversations as a means of negotiating the tension. In this way, the subjects of the activity system shifted the use of the genre as they identified tensions between activity systems’ motives. This shift in genre use to accommodate multiple motives of multiple activity systems depended on the interaction between the

students and me through the blog posts. Thus, to further use activity systems theory to map human experience in the service-learning project, I turn to my perspective as an instructor navigating multiple activity systems.

Instructor's Perspective of the Service-Learning Activity System

Just like the students, I became involved in the various activity systems manifested through the genres I chose to assign—particularly the online progress report/reflection assignment and the ways I shifted the genre through prompts provided for students. Figure 5.1 maps the WR 214 service-learning activity system from my perspective, including each role I sought to fulfill, the assigned genres, and the motives within the system. Each motive in this activity system is also a motive in another distinct activity system interacting with the classroom. As instructor, I sought genres and assignments that would address the university educational motives, the department's course-specific learning outcomes, and the professional communication disciplinary motives. As volunteer coordinator, I sought activities that would help my students address the outcomes set by INTO OSU for the Conversant Program. Beyond these two roles, I came to the project as a graduate teaching assistant seeking to complete a graduate degree in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film. This role introduced two new activity systems that affected the classroom and the service-learning project. As a graduate student, my role included fulfilling the thesis requirements put forth by the graduate program; thus, the motives (completing a thesis) influenced the tool (the service-learning project) for increasing my involvement in this particular activity system. Since the service-learning project

would serve as a case-study for my thesis, I needed it to continue regardless of the direction it took.

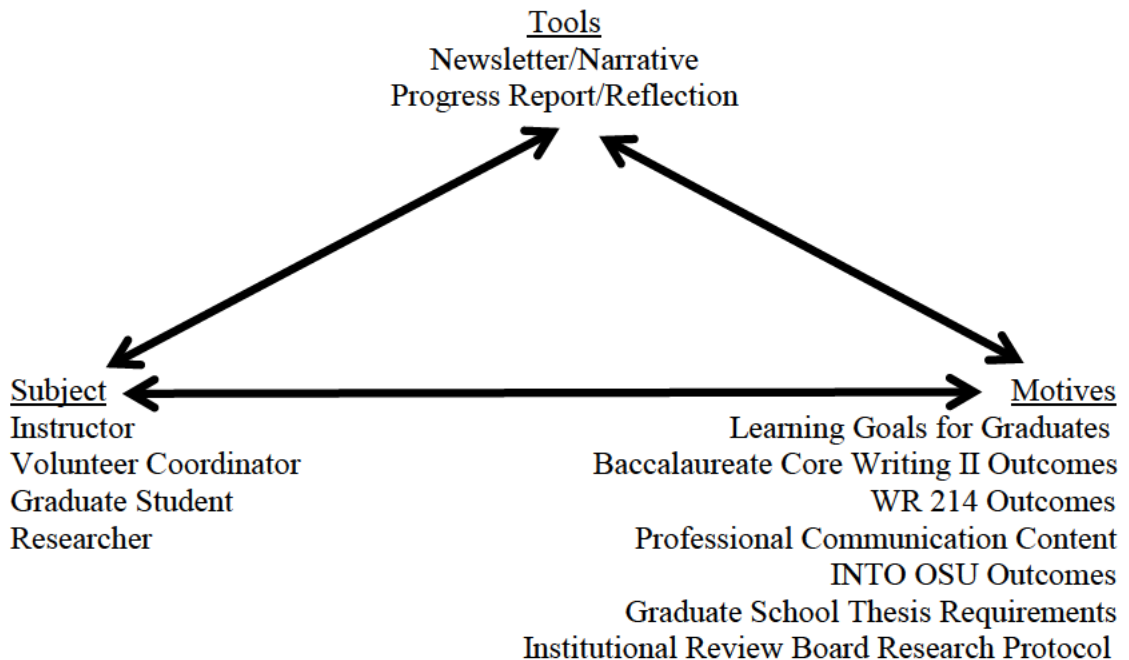


Figure 5.1 WR 214 Service-Learning Classroom Activity System

Further complicating my graduate student role was the human subject research study approval process required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In the academic research activity system, the IRB approval guidelines—used to pre-assess the research purposes, questions, and methodology—mediated my role as researcher. The motives—to produce a research protocol following ethical research practices— influenced and constrained the tools—the survey methods. Thus, the survey could not change during the project as I and the students gained new insight into such things as the effect and direction of the blog assignment. For example, since I stated assessing student learning of intercultural communication as a primary purpose of the research in the IRB proposal, I could not suddenly shift the purpose to be a study of genre or a study of impact on the INTO OSU partners. However, the blog assignment became a

dynamic tool within the classroom, open to change as the students' interacted with their partners and the course material. In week 4 of the project, I noted in my instructor journal the dynamism of the blog; at that point, I recognized that the genre became an effective feedback mechanism by which I could plan mini-class discussions. I also recognized the effect of the blog's open-ended design, stating that one challenge was tying their various ideas back to course themes, like the reasons behind professional etiquette or the need to focus on audience benefits in business communication. As the instructor, I was adapting and reacting to the students' writing; yet as the graduate student researcher, I still needed to keep the project connected to my approved research plan and progressing so that I could collect data.

Within the blog assignments, students identified early on the tension between the social context of the conversations and the professional/academic context of the classroom. My initial assumption was that students would perceive some tension between the service context and the business context. However, the tension between their expectations of social contexts and professional contexts became a dominant challenge and point of discussion in the course. In the instructor journal, I observed that some students perceived meetings with their partners to be "hanging out," and thus not related to business writing. In particular, some students mentioned that the conceptual schema relied on for analyzing and planning communication events—PAIBOC—was not relevant for these informal conversations.²⁰ For these students, the applicability of business writing concepts hinged on formality. That is, the social conversations with their INTO OSU partners were informal; for them, professional communication signified formality. Through this observation and my response in

²⁰ The PAIBOC schema stands for to Purpose, Audience, Information, Benefits, Objections, and Context.

subsequent blog prompts, the subjects of the classroom shifted the genre to focus more directly on the tension between social and academic contexts—what I identify in my instructor journal as tensions between “social and business culture” and “personal and corporate culture.” The blog assignment served as a tool for me to identify this tension within the network of activity systems in order to seek ways to make it productive for students.

I sought to transform the business writing classroom so that it addressed the values of a humanistic education rather than being a skills-based course. This tension might be described as operating between reproduction and transformation. My role as instructor required teaching the curriculum to reproduce writing in the professional communication discipline for the students. Since I was a first-time instructor of the course, this meant adopting a pre-set curriculum from the School of Writing, Literature, and Film to reproduce the expected course experience. The service-learning project *necessarily* pushed the boundaries of the course beyond its skills-based focus and towards applying those skills in a specific, real, and global context. My role within the project, thus, was contentious. As graduate student in an English studies program and volunteer coordinator, I entered the classroom with a deliberate humanist perspective; yet, the business writing students tended to enter the classroom with an expectation of learning a skill to be used for a corporate setting. From the humanist perspective, I introduced the service-learning project as a way of challenging students’ expectations that the course was meant simply to make them more marketable.

These two roles—graduate student of the humanities and business writing instructor—are not necessarily at cross-purposes. Greater emphasis on global learning

as a motive of the service-learning activity system ties together the purposes of a humanist education and the business communication classroom. Oregon State's Global Learning Initiative notes that the global learning goals are framed within the Learning Goals for Graduates ("Global Learning Initiative"). In "Facing (Up To) 'The Stranger' in Community Service Learning," Margaret Himley notes that service-learning can help students gain an understanding into global citizenship and thus become more marketable (432). Global learning as the common motive connecting students' likely expectation of the course—to learn skills that will make them marketable—and my additional purpose for the course—to help students develop understanding of global citizenship and responsibility—helps resolve the tension.

In addition to pinpointing the connection between focusing on skills and on conceptual values (global learning), activity systems analysis frames how I increased involvement in a professional communications discipline by shifting the direction of the course towards conceptual motives. By integrating service-learning into the course, I had the potential to overload an already full curriculum. Yet the project reaffirmed reasons for including business writing in a humanities department that values seeing the world from multiple perspectives and enabling students to shift their conceptual frames for understanding and using content. This is the approach I brought by including the service-learning project, and it necessarily complicated the classroom. Two weeks into the project, I offer the following reflection in my instructor journal: "I've noticed that on days that we are discussing the service-learning project, I come to the classroom with more motivation." In activity systems terms, the project's motives helped me increase involvement in the curriculum. Thus,

from the instructor's perspective, making the classroom more complicated was productive.

By presenting an activity systems analysis, I mapped the complexities and tensions that arose during the service-learning project. Furthermore, this analysis attended to the subjects' actions—as signified by their affecting the genres of the class—among the network activity systems to interact with and somehow account for the multiple motives of the course. Such an analysis, specifically through my perspective as the instructor, also highlights the challenge of effectively integrating a service-learning project, especially in a required course in which students must meet a set of already existing course outcomes that cannot be changed. Using activity systems also raises a question underlying the integration of this engaged pedagogy: if the service-learning project added such complexity and tension, was it worth it? Though perhaps not appropriate for integrating into every section of WR 214, the project situated this particular classroom more firmly in an English studies department. Furthermore, the value of the project comes in its stretching towards global learning. By focusing on communicating with strangers from different cultures, students can gain both a marketable skill appropriate for a business writing course and cultivate habits for conducting themselves in the face of difference and diversity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

An engaged pedagogy impacts the local community. Through the service-learning project presented in this thesis, my students and I stretched towards this ideal. For this project, the local community does not refer solely to the project's community partner—INTO OSU. The local community includes the university, the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, and the business writing curriculum. By examining students' perceived understanding of the Learning Goals for Graduates, I connected service-learning with local OSU educational goals. By adapting the project to existing standard curriculum from the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, I connected the course and department with university-wide initiatives. By focusing on international communication, I updated the business writing curriculum to meet the needs of a global workforce and a global campus. In the conclusion, I discuss the project's impact on this web of local communities and suggest topics for future research.

In conducting the first thesis study to focus on OSU's Learning Goals for Graduates, I sought in part to align existing Baccalaureate Core and WR 214 curricula with four of these goals most relevant to the course. Yet the project's purpose was not merely to align university goals with departmental and course outcomes and assess the effectiveness of this alignment. This service-learning project intentionally restructured the course so that it pointed first towards the learning goals, thereby connecting business writing with conceptual values and developmental goals. Thus, the course became values-based, placing skills learning in service to personal development of a life-long education. In "Student Self-Evaluations and Developmental Change," Richard Haswell argues for "human development as a

continuum of gradual shifts in affective and conceptual frames” (85). Furthermore, he suggests that this type of development takes “some degree of metacognition, some standing back from and reflecting on the process itself. Unlike frame filling (acquisition of content), frame changing seems to require certain forms of self-awareness” (86). For Haswell, reflection and self-evaluation go beyond giving students the space to record their own development; these activities also further develop students’ abilities to shift conceptual frames. Through the reflective writing assignment and the self-evaluative survey, the study created opportunities for the metacognition necessary to encourage individual ability to change conceptual frames. The combination of frame filling and frame changing encapsulates the promise of the service-learning project.

This study brings attention to the WR 214 curriculum, offering one potential model for revitalizing and updating the course to address the needs of students studying on a global campus and soon joining a global workforce. As one of the first courses in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film to connect students with international students at INTO OSU, this WR 214 course challenged students’ expectations. Students in my section (and I suspect in most business writing sections) arrived expecting course content focused solely on learning job-related skills. They expected these skills to be a product of the course. Instead, the course created an “embodied encounter” (Himley 434) with the other, forcing students to examine their own communication in a new cultural context. Through this project, then, I argue for the impact these embodied encounters have on student understanding of communication. The encounters give students a specific, real context in which to practice and explore their own communication skills and cultural values, both of

which are essential to function effectively as a global citizen. Juxtaposing the course's communication skills and concepts with the INTO partner conversations made those skills and concepts dynamic and pliable. By disrupting students' expectations for the course, I moved them from their comfort zones, thereby challenging them to become increasingly confident in communicating with people from diverse backgrounds.

The importance of real, conversational experiences—embodied encounters—aligns with the goals of INTO OSU's Cultural Ambassador Conversant Program. The program extends the international students classroom English language learning by providing a real communication context beyond the classroom. It gives the international students who choose to participate one more piece of an immersive English language learning experience. By participating, English language learners practice and explore their communication skills in a specific, local cultural context in order to more effectively interact with cultural and linguistic difference. Not only does the service-learning project support these INTO OSU goals, this case study is the first to include the Conversant Program in any university research. The study connects the Conversant Program with OSU curriculum, thus making a program designed specifically to benefit the international student community relevant and beneficial to the domestic student learning experience. This connection points towards a reciprocal learning experience. Though the study did not measure the extent to which the service-learning project developed reciprocal relationships between the classroom and INTO OSU, it supports and points towards future projects that further connect the international student experience with the domestic student experience so as to build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships.

While I focused the project and this case study on impacting the local OSU community, the study had limitations which call for future studies to further explore these claims. Since the study included only 20 students in one course and was the first study to assess the Learning Goals for Graduates, future areas of research emerged. For example, results unearthed a discrepancy between student-perceived benefits and student-perceived learning during the project. Further study could explore why students did not identify their own learning as a ‘benefit.’ Furthermore, the study identified a difference in student learning between students with and students without prior intercultural communication experience. This suggests a potential scaffolding in student learning, and future research could explore that scaffolding in order to establish a model for teaching intercultural communication through similar service-learning projects.

OSU’s relative inexperience with service-learning shaped this project’s focus on local impact and implementation of the engaged pedagogy, thus the project did not push the boundaries of the service-learning field. Instead of adding to the service-learning literature, I used the service-learning literature to impact the local community. Nevertheless, the project did employ an established service-learning pedagogical approach—‘writing-about-the-community’—in a new context. Service-learning in business writing tends to include assignments requiring students to produce documents for an outside agency. The ‘writing-about’ approach emphasizes critical reflection; by introducing this pedagogy to business writing, I embedded an element of personal development in business writing. Furthermore, the pedagogy inculcates metacognitive awareness of the ways in which skills and content studied inside the classroom function outside the classroom. The approach blended genres of

writing in the classroom—a newsletter article mixing an interview narrative with public relations advertising, a blog mixing reflection with progress reporting. Moreover, ‘writing-about-the-community’ is logistically simpler than other pedagogies. The writing projects address only outcomes and audiences within the scope of the course, making it a good model for teachers new to service-learning.

I not only introduced self-awareness and personal development to the business writing classroom, I also took a first step towards developing a more extensive pedagogy of engagement for the OSU writing classroom. Instead of providing a service-learning model for every writing classroom, I offer one model that may open the door for more service-learning projects in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film and the Baccalaureate Core curriculum. This project serves as one example of how service-learning is not only possible but valuable for students in a writing course. As the service-learning initiative at OSU grows, we can anticipate more examples and models of interesting and effective projects engaging students with their local communities. Such projects, and other engagement efforts, help students move beyond knowledge acquisition towards life-long learning. These projects reaffirm that learning course content connects directly to activity beyond the classroom. Engaged pedagogies like this service-learning project stretch the classroom towards the community.

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Appendices

Appendix A:
Learning Goals for Graduates and Course Learning Outcomes

OSU Learning Goals for Graduates

- 1. Competency and Knowledge in Multiple Fields** - As an OSU graduate, you will show a depth of knowledge in one or more majors as it relates to its history, problems, strategic thinking processes and ways of knowing, and vocabulary. You will also show a breadth of knowledge across the disciplines, which include the humanities and arts, science, social science and mathematics, from both technical and critical orientations.
- 2. Critical Thinking** - As an OSU graduate, you will evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources and perspectives to make informed decisions and solve problems; you will exhibit intellectual curiosity, including the disposition and ability to engage in evidence-based reasoning and critical thinking.
- 3. Pluralism and Cultural Legacies** - As an OSU graduate, you will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of human cultural, historical and social experiences, and be able to reflect on how your individual life experience relates to the complex nature of human conditions in other places and times.
- 4. Collaboration** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.
- 5. Social Responsibility and Sustainability** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the capacity to construct an engaged, contributing life, and to engage in actions that reflect an understanding of the values of service, citizenship, and social responsibility, and demonstrate global competence by understanding the interdependent nature of local and global communities.
- 6. Communication** - As an OSU graduate, you will be able to present and evaluate information, as well as to devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.
- 7. Self-Awareness and Life-Long Learning** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop awareness of and appreciation for your personal strengths, values, and challenges, and you will cultivate the ability to use that knowledge to guide your future learning and development.

OSU Learning Goals for Graduates and Course Outcomes as Listed on WR 214 Syllabus

Learning Goals for Graduates

- **Pluralism and Cultural Legacies:** You will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of cultural, historical, and social experiences and be able to reflect on how your own life experience relates to human experience in other places and times.
- **Collaboration:** As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.
- **Social Responsibility and Sustainability:** You will develop life skills and values of service, citizenship and social responsibility and demonstrate global competence and understanding.
- **Communication:** You will be able to present and evaluate information as well as to devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate (orally and in writing) with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.

Learning Outcomes for Writing II Courses

- Apply multiple theories, concepts, and techniques for creating and evaluating written communication.
- Write effectively for diverse audiences within a specific area or discipline using appropriate standards and conventions.
- Apply critical thinking to writing and writing process, including revision.

Learning Outcomes for WR 214

This course will focus on understanding the types of documents used frequently in organizations and creating effective models of these documents. Successful students in Writing in Business will demonstrate their ability to understand and use knowledge of audience, purpose, and professional business techniques at the 200-level to:

- Plan and produce a variety of professional documents
- Apply appropriate persuasive techniques including visual rhetoric and design
- Use standard workplace formats and design for letters, newsletters, memos, reports, etc.
- Research, analyze, accurately document, and report information
- Develop the revision process to bring draft documents to their highest potential
- Present themselves ethically as professional, qualified, and courteous
- Use correct conventions such as appropriate grammar, voice, and spelling

**Appendix B:
Institutional Review Board Proposal for a Study Involving Human Subjects**

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

November 11, 2012

1. Protocol Title: Global Business Communication and Relationship-Based Service-Learning

PERSONNEL

2. Principal Investigator: Vicki Tolar Burton
3. Student Researcher: Allen Sprague
4. Investigator Qualifications

Vicki Tolar Burton is a professor of English in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film and the director of the Writing Intensive Curriculum. She also works as the interim director of OSU's Bacc Core. She has a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition and specializes in writing pedagogy and curricular development.

Allen Sprague has completed graduate-level writing pedagogy courses in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film and has completed WR 517, the practicum for teaching Business Writing. He has also participated in INTO OSU's Conversant Program (now named the Cultural Ambassadors Program). Allen Sprague will be teaching WR 213 Writing for Business in winter term, 2013.

5. Student Training and Oversight

The student researcher completed all required IRB ethics training modules. He has also read appropriate scholarly articles, consulted with the coordinators of the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassadors Conversant Program Julianna Betjemann and Benjamin Kibbler, and attended a Center for Teaching and Learning workshop on service-learning led by the service-learning faculty coordinator Michelle Inderbitzin. The student researcher will be a student observer in a service-learning faculty learning community during winter term run by the Center for Teaching and Learning. During the winter term, the principal investigator and student researcher will have weekly meetings to assess the progress of the project.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

6. Description of Research

A. Objectives

The purpose of the project is to pilot a service-learning project as an effort to expand global learning in Bacc Core curriculum. WR 214 Writing for Business fulfills the Bacc Core requirement for a Writing II course. The service-learning project with INTO OSU seeks to increase global competence and understanding, as well as communication across cultures. The service-learning project will connect WR 214 students with INTO OSU students through INTO OSU's Cultural Ambassadors Program. The service-learning component is built into the course for all WR 214 students. The research will only come from a survey administered after the completion of the service-learning project. The survey is voluntary and will not affect student grades or standing in the course. The research will focus only on assessing the service-learning experience of the WR 214 students.

B. Intended Project Uses

The research will be used for Allen Sprague's master's thesis for completion of a graduate degree in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film. The thesis will be made available to the public via the OSU Library's Scholars Archive. Findings may be presented at conferences and published in scholarly journals.

7. Background Justification

The project combines research on service-learning writing pedagogy with research on intercultural communication within the business writing context. Results anticipated from this study include:

- Evidence indicating to what extent the service-learning curriculum component successfully addresses OSU learning goals for graduates
- Evidence indicating to what extent service-learning is an effective pedagogical method for teaching intercultural communication in WR 214
- Evidence indicating to what extent the project supports students' ability to communicate WR 214 course content through writing
- Evidence indicating to what extent service-learning is an effective and desirable curriculum component in WR 214 Writing for Business

This study comes in response to the university's desire for more experiential and global learning components in the core curriculum. This desire is articulated through the service-learning coordinator position in the Center for Teaching and Learning and through the learning goals for graduates. This study also addresses a stated desire to pursue service-learning connections with the Bacc Core curriculum as a part of the broader effort to revitalize the general education experience at OSU.

8. Subject Population

Participants will be OSU students who have selected to enroll in WR 214 Writing for Business, a class that fulfills OSU's Bacc Core Writing II requirement recommended for sophomore-level students. Participants will all be over 18 years of age.

The total enrollment for the course is capped at 27 students. Enrollment for the research study will be voluntary, but will not exceed 27.

All enrolled subjects are adults over the age of 18. This study will not involve vulnerable populations.

Study subjects must be students enrolled in the student researcher's section of WR 214 Writing for Business in winter term, 2013. All survey participants will have completed the service-learning component for WR 214.

Students will be recruited during class time in the final week, week 10, of the winter term course. Participation in the study will be made voluntary. All students will be given the survey and asked to return the survey, whether or not they have completed it. The survey will not ask for any identifying information to help ensure confidentiality. To further ensure confidentiality, all survey data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the PI's office on campus. Alternative consent information detailing the purpose of the survey in the research and the students' choice to participate will be included directly on the survey. Completion of the survey will not affect grade standing in the WR 214 course. The survey will be the only recruitment material given to WR 214 students.

9. Consent Process

This study is requesting waiver of documentation of informed consent because the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. The study will follow established guidelines for alternative consent by including alternative consent language directly on the survey given to participants. Participants will document their consent by choosing to complete the survey.

Consent will be obtained directly on the survey given to participants in the study. The survey will be given to WR 214 students during class time because the results of the study directly affect WR 214 students. The instructor will give the survey to all the students and ask all students to return the survey even if they chose not to complete it. This will protect students' privacy by ensuring that the instructor does not know who has chosen to complete the survey.

The instructor will give the survey to all students and explain the purpose of the survey within the research project. The instructor will also explain the types of questions on the survey prior to the students completing it. The instructor will verbally assess comprehension of the survey requirements by asking the following questions:

- So that I am sure that you understand what the study involves, would you please tell me what the survey requires and how it will be used?
- What questions can I answer for you?

10. Methods and Procedures

The research project will rely on survey data taken from a survey administered in WR 214 during week 10. The instructor will administer the survey during class time. If students choose not to complete the survey, they will spend the allotted time completing a reflective writing assignment. They will write a letter in which they reflect on the benefits and challenges of the service-learning component of this course. They will narrate the experience of volunteering at INTO OSU and describe what they gained from the experience and what they believe their partners gained from the experience. They will also indicate how the experience

improved or did not improve their understanding of the course content and their understanding of cross-cultural communication. No identifying information will be required on the reflective writing assignment.

The survey will be divided into a demographic section with 3 questions, a quantitative section with 4 questions, and a qualitative section with 4 questions. The quantitative section will require participants to respond to questions using a 5-point Likert scale schema in which they evaluate the effectiveness of the service-learning project in meeting learning goals and the effect of the project on their learning. The qualitative section will ask participants to respond to open-ended questions that further address the effect of the service-learning project on students' learning.

The researcher will analyze the mix of quantitative and qualitative data for the effect of the service-learning project on student learning and the alignment of the service-learning project with OSU learning goals for graduates. The researcher will analyze answers to questions in the qualitative section in order to evaluate the effect of the service-learning project on learning intercultural communication and the effect of writing during the service-learning project on student understanding of the project. The survey should take participants no more than 20 minutes to complete.

11. Anonymity or Confidentiality

Survey responses collected for this study will be saved for 3 years after study conclusion after which time the information will be destroyed. The researcher will store these records on paper in a locked filing cabinet within the principal investigator's locked office on campus. No direct identifiers will be recorded on the surveys. Survey results will not be placed on the subjects' records.

12. Risks

Student subjects may perceive risk to their grade in WR 214 if they do not volunteer to participate in the study. Study recruitment will minimize this perceived risk by asking for volunteers after all grades except the final assignment have been calculated. The instructor will explicitly state that choosing to participate or not participate in the study will not affect grades. All students will be given the survey. To help ensure confidentiality, no identifying information will be collected on the survey and the survey data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the PI's office on campus. Grade calculations will be made explicit through the course website on Blackboard. Grade criteria will be made explicit on the course syllabus and all assignments, clearly indicating that all points for the course are accounted for prior to participation in the study. There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you.

13. Benefits

This study has no direct benefits for participants, other than contributing to an improved WR 214 curriculum. Indirect benefits to participants will include ensuring that the service-learning project has high impact on student learning. Participation in the study will ensure enough evidence has been gathered to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of the service-learning curriculum component, and to accurately describe student experience and student outcomes in the course. This will help improve pedagogical practices in the Business Writing classroom and service-learning's potential for teaching business writing concepts.

14. Assessment of Risk:Benefit ratio

The study has extremely low risk. Potential perceived risk to students' grades has been addressed.

WR 214 Writing for Business Service-Learning Project Survey

The study represented by the following survey involves research in the use of service-learning projects for WR 214 Writing for Business. The purpose of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the service-learning component in teaching intercultural communication within a business writing course. By participating in this survey, you will help evaluate the appropriateness of service-learning in WR 214. Your participation will also help improve the teaching of this course for future WR 214 students.

There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you. No identifying data will be collected on this survey that might connect survey results with the participant. No identifying information will be used in this study. All survey records will be stored in a locked cabinet for 3 years after the completion of the study.

Participation in this survey will not result in any direct benefits to you. Participation in this survey is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty to the participant's grades or standing in the course. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Completion of the survey will take 15 to 20 minutes. Whether or not you choose to complete the survey, please turn in the survey at the end of class. Please do not write your name or any other identifying information on your survey.

If you choose not to complete the survey, please use the next 15 minutes completing a reflective writing assignment in which you reflect on the benefits and challenges of the service-learning component of this course. Narrate the experience of volunteering at INTO OSU. Describe what you gained from the experience. Also indicate how the experience improved or did not improve your understanding of the course content and your understanding of cross-cultural communication. Please do not write your name or any other identifying information on the reflective writing assignment.

For questions regarding the research or your rights as a participant in the survey, contact Allen Sprague at spragall@onid.orst.edu or Professor Vicki Tolar Burton at Vicki.tolarburton@oregonstate.edu.

1. Before participating in the service-learning project at INTO OSU, have you ever had face-to-face conversations with a person from a non-English speaking country?

2. Before participating in the service-learning project at INTO OSU, have you ever had face-to-face conversations with a person from your INTO OSU partner's country of origin?

3. Are you from Oregon?

4. To what extent have **courses you have completed at OSU prior to WR 214** contributed to your understanding of each of the following?

	<u>very large</u> extent	<u>large</u> extent	<u>moderate</u> extent	<u>small</u> extent	<u>no</u> extent
Knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences					
Collaboration in a team or partnership as a positive contributor to meet a shared goal					
Service, citizenship and social responsibility					
Global competence and understanding					
Exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience					

5. To what extent has your experience with service-learning in WR 214 as an INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador contributed to your understanding of each of the following?

	<u>very large</u> extent	<u>large</u> extent	<u>moderate</u> extent	<u>small</u> extent	<u>no</u> extent
Knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences					
Collaboration in a team or partnership as a positive contributor to meet a shared goal					
Service, citizenship and social responsibility					
Global competence and understanding					
Exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience					

6. In your opinion, to what extent did the following class activities related to the service-learning project improve your understanding of cross-cultural communication?

	<u>very</u> <u>large</u> extent	<u>large</u> extent	<u>moderat</u> <u>e</u> extent	<u>small</u> extent	<u>no</u> extent
Reading about cross-cultural communication					
Writing discussion posts about your conversations with your INTO OSU partner					
Interviewing your INTO OSU partner and writing about the interview					

7. In your opinion, to what extent did you and your partner benefit from your participation in the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassadors Program?

	<u>very large</u> extent	<u>large</u> extent	<u>moderate</u> extent	<u>small</u> extent	<u>no</u> extent
You					
Your Partner					

8. What did you learn about communicating with someone from another culture by participating in the service-learning project through the INTO OSU Cultural Ambassadors Program?

9. Of the learning goals listed below, which one was most affected by your service-learning project and why?

- Knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences
- Collaboration in a team or partnership as a positive contributor to meet a shared goal
- Service, citizenship and social responsibility
- Global competence and understanding
- Exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience

10. Were you able to find things in common with your INTO OSU partner? If so, why? If not, why not?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about your service-learning experience at INTO OSU?

**Appendix C:
Additional Survey Data**

Table 4-6. Mean Responses to Survey question 5: To what extent has your experience with service-learning in WR 214 as an INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador contributed to your understanding of each of the following?

	Mean Response
Knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences	3.35
Collaboration in a team or partnership as a positive contributor to meet a shared goal	3
Service, citizenship and social responsibility	3.15
Global competence and understanding	3.5
Exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience	3.45

Likert Scale: “very large extent”=5; “large extent”=4; “moderate extent”=3; “small extent”=2; “no extent”=1

Table 4-7. Comparing Mean Responses to Survey questions 4 and 5
Question 4: To what extent have courses you have completed at OSU prior to WR 214 contributed to your understanding of each of the following?
Question 5: To what extent has your experience with service-learning in WR 214 as an INTO OSU Cultural Ambassador contributed to your understanding of each of the following?

	Question 4 Mean Response	Question 5 Mean Response
Knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultural, historical, and social experiences	3.35	3.35
Collaboration in a team or partnership as a positive contributor to meet a shared goal	3.8	3
Service, citizenship and social responsibility	3.2	3.15
Global competence and understanding	3.25	3.5
Exchanging ideas clearly and effectively in order to communicate with a diverse audience	3.35	3.45

Likert Scale: “very large extent”=5; “large extent”=4; “moderate extent”=3; “small extent”=2; “no extent”=1

Table 4-8. Mean Responses to Survey Question 6: In your opinion, to what extent did the following class activities related to the service-learning project improve your understanding of cross-cultural communication?

	Mean Response
Reading about cross-cultural communication	3.2
Writing discussion posts about your conversations with your INTO OSU partner	2.95
Interviewing your INTO OSU partner and writing about the interview	3.3

Likert Scale: “very large extent”=5; “large extent”=4; “moderate extent”=3; “small extent”=2; “no extent”=1